

cinema Canada

30

Pay-TV Special Section

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The Pay TV Special Section (44 pages), edited by the Council of Canadian Filmmakers, is inserted in the middle of this issue, between pages 30 and 31. There is one error on the contents page of this section; the phone number (514) 272-5354 is that of **Cinema Canada**, not the Council of Canadian Filmmakers.

AUG 29 2011

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REVERB

Notes From the Sub Dept.

O.K.! I sent you a cheque on May 4th 1976 with a request that you renew my subscription and the cheque came back, cancelled. I have it in my hand now.

When no magazines arrived I thought: the Olympics, office scandal, minor alcoholism at the circulation level, out actually watching some of the movies they're writing about or so busy filling orders that try as they may they just haven't got around to mine yet.

Imagine my delight, then, when a fat padded envelope arrived with *exact duplicates* of the issues I received via my subscription last year, specifically, No. 21 - No. 27 inclusive. Instant replay. Not so instant.

Now that my cellar is doubly full with such a vintage year, I am ready and willing to sample, not without hesitation of course (no real Canadian wants to take a risk), the latest pressing.

If you do have any of the recent issues, don't be ashamed. I'll welcome their shiny snouts poking out of my P.O. box and give them a good home.

And before the metaphors come crashing down around me, snip off their cautionary tails.

Sincerely,

Colin Browne
Saanichton, B.C.

We thank Mr. Browne for his good humor. We make a few mistakes but at least we make them generously. Ed.

Birdland

I really hate to nit-pick, but, after having my name printed in your great magazine twice in as many months, my ego has swelled to the point that I feel it is necessary to point out that I am not related to heavy lifting equipment, waterfowl, or bathroom fixtures. For the record I would hereafter like to be known as signed below. Do not feel bad about this as I sometimes wish that you were right. However I would probably never get future work under an alias as my filmmaking expertise is connected to the previously obtained monicker.

Thank you for your time and trouble. Keep up the good work.

L. Scott Crowe

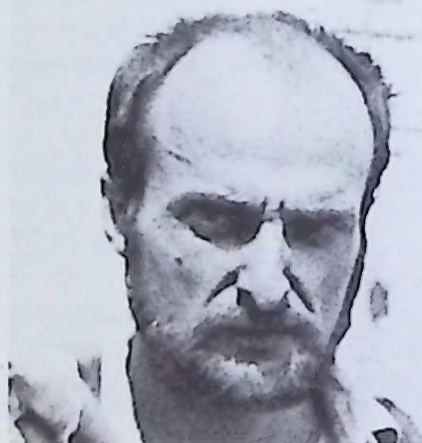
Cinema Canada No. 27 (page 6, col. 4, line 13) identifies Mr. Crowe as Scott Crane. Our apologies. - Ed.

Barbeau a Little Late

Dear Sir,

Thank you for your excellent article-interview with Art Director Francois Barbeau. Too bad it was not accompanied by a photograph of Barbeau. Is it too late to print one?

Tess Taconis
Canadian Filmmakers
Distribution Centre



François Barbeau

A Collective Effort

I must correct what I consider to be a serious error of omission in your reports on the Grierson Seminars (*Cinema Canada*, No. 29).

I stressed in the presentation of *There Goes the Neighbourhood* that the film was, from the start, the collective effort of five people and not under the directing hand of a single person. The five are, with myself, Elizabeth MacKenzie, Bruce McNiven, Joshua Nefsky, and Cynthia Withers. They must be called upon to share in the virtues of the film and, alas, to share the responsibility for the shortcomings of our modest effort.

The error might have been rectified in the "Capsules" section but, oddly, *There Goes the Neighbourhood* was mysteriously omitted from mention. Thus, to fill another gap of information, distribution inquiries for the film should be directed to the Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre, 406 Jarvis Street, Toronto M4Y 2G6.

Regards,

Blaine Allan

Never Forget You

The following letter was addressed to Robert Rouveroy, c.s.c., author of the Rough Cut column in issue No. 27.

Dear Bob:

We have been catching up on back reading and have noted your article in *Cinema Canada* No. 27 about the high cost of equipment as opposed to the lack of upgrading of rental rates.

We certainly agree with your argument about poor rental rates but, at the other end of the scale, we think you have forgotten possibly the most popular and reliable camera on the market today, which does not cost \$24,000. Our packages run anywhere from \$10,000 to \$14,000, depending on whether the camera is equipped with single-system sound or not, and if you think that the camera is not suitable for production, we would ask you to check with Bob Crone who has possibly put through half a million feet since obtaining his camera.

We hope you will advise your customers that they can purchase first-class equipment at reasonable prices for far less than the above-mentioned \$24,000.

Bob, no doubt you just forgot us.

Roy Ramsdale
President
Alex L. Clark Ltd.

Rouveroy replies:

Wouldn't dream of forgetting you. Problem is that few cameramen with CP16s work for CBC film services. Maurice French of the CBC stated that he thought an equitable rent would be 10 percent less than the Arri BL, in view of the price difference. But a little problem remains, however. The CP16, or the Eclair ACL for that matter, are not really suitable for indoor or studio work. They are too noisy. Now, Roy, before you blow your stack, yes I know about the Lincoln series shot on CP16. But according to American Cinematographer, they were modified, with compendiums, glass fronts and barneys. They were not portable anymore. The BL, while marginal, still wins hands down in studio quietness. So, for cameramen updating their package to work free-lance for CBC it pays to look at the CP16, especially in view of a recent upgrade in rental and other fees announced for July 5, 1976, of around 10 percent. Yes, that is 10 percent increase since 1969. Now I can afford that Caddy...

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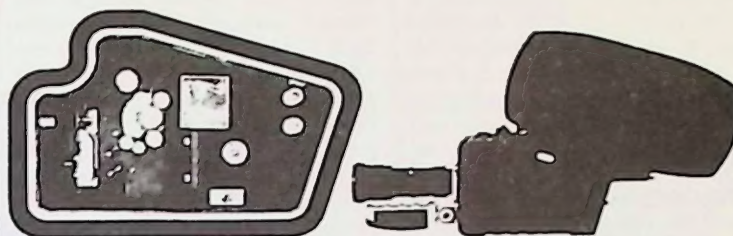
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FILM NEWS

Major Developments

POLICY — Several indications point toward a new film policy. Faulkner has persuaded cabinet that the Senate should be spoken strongly to about their lack of glee over Bill C-58; pay-TV may be the key to cash flow in feature filmdom; MacDonald's spring budget extended the 100% write-off of capital investment to shorts and non-features, and cut the write-off on foreign feature investment to 30% (at 60% it was still more advantageous in the long run to invest in foreign efforts than Canadian films allowing 100%); his Olympic arrangements for the Queen were hugely successful, and he even got to meet her.

As well, Faulkner has proposed sweeping changes in the CFDC when Parliament considers renewing its mandate in the next session, hopefully in the fall because the CFDC has money to last only until next spring. The CFDC's role will be expanded to include shorts and TV financial investment; the corporation will be allowed to lend money to production companies as well as for specific films, thus perhaps providing a solution to the Canadian producer's chronic cash-flow problem; any new activities will be funded out of additional monies, so that current CFDC annual feature investment (about \$2.7 million) will be maintained; and discussions will be held with the industry.

Furthermore, especially since the Tompkins study is now complete and provides the official-study veneer to the whole business, action is possible.

In one corner action has been proclaimed: NFB Head Andre Lamy, appearing before the Commons Committee on Broadcasting. Film and the Arts, issued a policy statement calling for a film policy and proposed for the NFB a restriction and probable curtailment of feature production because of continued frustration with access to theatrical distribution and exhibition; establishing a computer information bank to store names, etc. of any Canadian film ever made and that the general public should have use of this information source;



Cold Journey

more co-productions with the private sector as well as total outside contracting; more freelancers at the Board on a limited basis. (At the same time a kernel of joy was available for distribution students in the country: not on a level with *Jaws* earnings, but supporting the community and receiving community support in return was the NFB's *Cold Journey*, a 16 mm feature about Indians in a white man's world by Martin Defalco, who had in his crew several natives. In Le Pas, Manitoba the film was asked to be held over by exhibitors, and the theatre was full even on Stanley Cup broadcast nights. Possibly Canadians do want to see films about themselves.)

CCFM — One of Faulkner's problems has also been cabinet and parliamentary support. Our legislators wish to avoid committing themselves on any issue except nationalism, which they studiously do not support. They need vocal pressure, and in May the CCFM organized a petition from 1,000 filmmakers and concerned citizens to present to all three political parties simultaneously. Outlining the state of Canadian filmdom, the petition calls for a film policy from the Secretary of State, reorganizing the CFDC with industry consultation, reconsidering the definition of 'Canadian' in the capital-cost allowance, encouraging distribution and exhibition to be majority Canadian-owned, increasing CBC showings of Canadian films, increasing CBC and NFB co-production with the

private industry, encouraging Air Canada to show Canadian films, initiating federal-provincial quota and levy discussions.

As footnotes to the above, Air Canada has just renewed its movie contract with Inflight Services of New York for about three years and about three million dollars.

CRAWLEY — In what might have been a landmark case, watched eagerly in the US and Canada by all independent producers, Budge Crawley settled out of court in his lawsuit against Universal for mishandling of *Janis*, so while Budge shrewdly took the money and ran, things remain the same for all independents.

MARITIMES — And in Nova Scotia on the one hand Gerald McNeil is getting ready to spend more money in his battle against government censorship, for the Supreme Court has agreed to hear the government's appeal of McNeil's recent victory. Of course government costs will be paid by the taxpayers, and resources are, to be blunt, unlimited. On another hand, John Rocca's suit against the foreign distributors and exhibitors was heard in Halifax court in late spring, and the judge's decision is due in early August. From trial observers comes the assessment that Rocca will probably lose. And also in Halifax (a hotbed of jurisprudence) it seems that the NFB is about to open a 16 mm theatre in that fair city. The only flaw in the plan is an act that says that no

16 mm theatre can be opened within a five-mile radius of a 35 mm theatre. More fireworks may occur if the NFB is challenged, because they say they'll fight. (The Board also intends to open 16 mm theatres in Newfoundland.)

Production

Feature production is on the move — yes, and features are being made, too, not just "planned". Herbert Harker's best-seller *Goldenrod* has finally reached the screen after two years of scurrying about. His agent got nowhere and when Janine Manatis and Duane Howard of Toronto decided to pursue the option, they got it. But they couldn't raise the money to shoot it, and when August Films (*Black Christmas*) made an offer, they accepted. David Susskind and Talent Associates came in and brought CBS-TV from the US. Now it'll be shown as a Movie of the Week 90 days after theatrical release in Canada.

Howard is associate producer under producer Gerry Arbeid, and Harvey Hart directs. Script is by Lionel Chetwynd, and the stars are Tony Lo Bianco, Gloria Carlin (Chetwynd's wife) and Donnelly Rhodes and Donald Pleasance. Seems that CBS "suggested" Lo Bianco, based on market research as to his audience pull; at any rate, the \$1.3 million deal, with the CFDC putting up \$150,000 and Famous Players \$100,000, went ahead in Calgary in early June. The love story has also been moved up from the 1930s to the 1950s, also supposedly upon CBS's suggestion. Harry Makin is DOP.

Larry Dane is finally shooting his postponed *Rituals*, with Peter Carter as director. Astral jumped in to help the financial situation for this *Deliverance* of Wawa, Ontario, and insisted that Hal Holbrook be hired as lead. Other leads include Dane himself, Ken James, Robin Gammell, Gary Reineke, and Chris Wiggins. The CFDC has contributed \$250,000 of the \$660,000 budget, and Famous Players \$165,000. Shooting began in June.

Summer Rain, Ratch Wallace's postponed feature set in an Ontario boarding school, also went before the cameras in early August. Wallace is now only listed as writer, as Henning Jacobson, with Deane Judson and Englishman George Willoughby now acting as producers. It's an Anglo-Canadian co-production with Odeon money. David Warner and Honor Blackman star, and shooting is being done in Lakefield, Ontario, just north of Peterborough.

Welcome to Blood City, becoming better known as *Actors' Blood*, is winding up shooting in Kleinburg, Ontario. This Anglo-Canadian co-production, also reportedly with Famous money, is a sci-fi epic about a group which has to fight its way out of a town controlled by killers, all as a test. Leads are Jack Palance, Samantha Eggar, and, as a substitute for Joseph Bottoms, who couldn't appear because his presence violated the CFDC Canadian content rule, Keir Dullea, who is acceptable because even though he's American, he lives in London (?). Director is TV veteran Peter Sasdy from England. Hollis McLaren, Barry Morse, and Chuck Shamata are also featured. Some misunderstandings regarding treatment of actors brought ACTRA into the midst of the production, and other troubles include a rumor that the CFDC pulled its money out. EMI in Britain, and Ambassador and Famous Players in Canada are other partners.

In low-budget efforts, Allan Moyle has completed **The Rubber Gun Show**, with many of the same group involved in **Montreal Main**. Steve Lack was writer and producer, Frank Vitale was cameraman and

Moyle directed... In Toronto CFDC backed the low-budget **Outrageous**, director Richard Benner's film with female impersonator Craig Russell... And in Vancouver, a CFDC low-budget effort is **Skip Tracer**, directed by Zale Dalen.

Meanwhile, planning takes place. Alan King, despite the setback of losing Budge Crawley as executive producer — replaced by Pierre Lamy — because of script differences (Crawley wanted more input by W.O. Mitchell, King more emphasis on the writing of his wife Patricia Watson), has pushed the start date of **Who Has Seen the Wind?** ahead only two weeks to the end of August. King auditioned publicly for his child lead, but no other casting has been announced and not even the kid has been found. King is negotiating with Donnelly Rhodes at this writing.

W.O. Mitchell is not idle, though. He's working on scripts based on his stage play, **Back to Beulah**, possibly for Fil Fraser/CTV, and on a script about a black cowboy, a story optioned by Maxine Samuels at one time... Don Owen is writing another script, tentatively titled **Greenhouse Blues**... Twentieth Century-Fox and Astral have two movies to go in their three-pic deal, after **Breaking Point**... Tom Hendry, of theatre fame, is working on a feature, **Private Places**, with Ron Kelly.

Paramount and others, including actor Mike Connors, have bought a first novel by Montreal writer Philippe Vanrijndt, title of which is **The Tetramachus Collection**. Deal was \$50,000 for the option and another \$50,000 if the book hits the bestseller list. That's

the second recent movie deal arranged by publishers Lester and Orpen, the first being Earl Glick's purchase of Lance Hill's novel **King of White Lady** for \$100,000... Alex Grasso's Productions and Saroy Film Productions of Canada plan a feature on **The Black Donnelleys**. Writers are Mark Bruce Rosen and Karl Schanzer. The production may be shot in Italy.

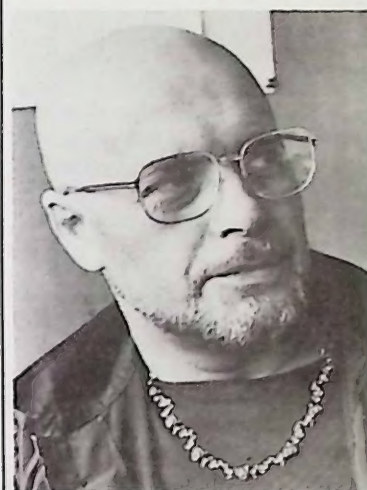
John Kemeny has two films planned. One is **Trailblazers**, a romantic triangle story set among Hudson's Bay Company members. The other is a Bethune film, and Ted Allan has been signed to do the script. Interestingly enough, this film will probably form part of Kemeny's co-production deal with Columbia. In the early '50s, Allen wrote the best-selling biography of Bethune, but after some overtures, Hollywood ran from the project, fearing harassment from growing McCarthyism. And Columbia has picked up **Shadow of a Hawk**, the film that Kemeny recently produced in BC.

An interesting production is on in St. Johns this summer. Dino de Laurentiis is producing, with Paramount and Famous Films of New York, a killer whale story called **Orca**. Richard Harris and Charlotte Rampling star, Michael Anderson directs, Luciano Vincenzoni is executive producer and co-author with Sergio Donati, and Ted Moore is cameraman. It is just another location shoot, except that de Laurentiis acquired his financial backing for **Buffalo Bill** entirely in Canada, and at that time was reportedly embarking on a multi-picture deal in Canada with Canadian money. It's a good thing that Canadian investors are putting money into movies.

Short filmmaking is also on the move. Clarke Mackey has completed a film for Ontario's Workmen's Compensation Board... The National Film Board is producing a series of films, in co-production with Mexico, on problems of cultural identity, in particular vis-à-vis the US. Shooting will be in Spanish and French, with some English tracks. At the Toronto Filmmakers' Co-op production is active. David Leach completed **Expansion** and showed it at 15 Dancers Theatre. Patrick Lee is editing his docu-comedy **Pulling Phones**. Director Al Goldstein has completed **Let's Get a Move on**,

a docu-drama on treatment of retarded children. Peter Wronski directed **American Nights**, about a mugger.

And Bill Boyle will start shooting **Prairie Landscapes** on August 18. It's a one-hour film, stage, and video adaptation, with script by Boyle and Dale Cooper, of a theatrical piece done last summer in Saskatchewan by Theatre Passe-Muraille and 25th Street House. Funded by the Canada Council's Explorations and the Saskatchewan Arts Board, it features Linda Griffiths, Karen Wiens, Layne Colman, Andy Tahn, Chris Covert and Bob Collins. Film camera is by David Ostriker and video will be handled by Chris Patterson and Robert Appelbe.



George Bloomfield

Despite the Olympics, TV continues. At CBC George Bloomfield just finished a Ted Allen script called **Love Is a Long Shot**. Don Haldane directed **Hank**, with a script by Don Bailey and starring Bob Warner, Richard Donat and Chuck Shamata. Robert Sherrin will produce on tape an adaptation of a story, **The Making of the President 1944**, from Morley Torgov's prize-winning collection **A Good Place to Come From**. In the sitcom category, executive producer Ron Kelly is trying desperately to save **The Royal Suite**, which, despite good writers and acting regulars Maggie Griffiths, Wendy Thatcher and John Evans, as well as guest stars Gordon Pinsent, Jane Mallett and Elizabeth Shepherd among others, seems doomed. And Stanley Colbert, who ran the CFDC's script course last year, has been hired to oversee film at CBC drama, working especially with the writers of **Sidestreet** to add



Frank Vitale, Alan Moyle and Stephen Lack

polish... Harry Rasky has completed his biographical portrait of Chagall, and is planning a film on the mysterious Peking Man next, which he calls a real-life adventure story.

At the NFB Donald Brittain is shooting a current affairs show for the CBC on the automobile and has another planned... David Cronenberg is editing his half-hour drama *The Italian Machine* for CBC, and André Th  berge is editing *Quicksilver*, also a CBC half-hour... Claude Jutra is shooting all over Canada for the CBC drama department. He just wound up in Vancouver, and has other scripts planned.

CTV is busy, too. A musical comedy special, *The Imperial Grand Band*, was aired in July, and, strangely for CTV and their avid foreign sales quest, it wasn't just a variety show. Dick Clark was executive producer, Seymour Berns directed, and Charles Isaacs wrote it, plus it was a story — about a musical group who inherit a hotel on the verge of bankruptcy and hold a concert with the de Franco Family to raise money. Starring were Libby Stephens, Jaro Dick, Shimmy Plener, Martin Short, Jack Creley and Kay Hawtrey... Perry Rosemond left CBC's *King of Kensington* to produce CTV's current American show, *The David Steinberg Show*... Julie Amato will have her own variety series, with Cliff Jones and Bill Hartley of CTV's *Kidstuff* handling production duties... While appearing in *Why Shoot the Teacher?* for CTV, Welsh actor Kenneth Griffith talked to CTV's Larry Herzog about appearing in a series of six documentaries dealing with Canadian historical characters.

Even Global seems to be making Canadian shows — at first sight, that is. Planned are 11 hours of Canadian production, up from the current five. Included will be a monthly effort by the Second City troupe, a police drama based on actual cases, comic items on *Mixed Doubles*, 30-minute mini-specials of new talent on *Caught in the Act*, and expansion of the *Be My Guest* format to include performances.

TVOntario has announced an ambitious series, so important that program director Jim Hanley will take a six-month leave to work on it. Until late December this year Hanley will work with Northrop Frye on a 13-part

series to be based on Frye's new book, due out this fall. Theme is an expansion of Frye's thesis that a direct relationship exists between the Bible and all Western literature... Another major effort, to be produced with the CBC and BBC, is *The Age of Uncertainty*, wherein John Kenneth Galbraith will host an examination of the history of economic thought.

And, lest all you freelancers out there lose heart during the struggle to become a mogul, think upon animator Al Guest, whose Rainbow Productions has sold *Captain Nemo*, an animation series, to CBC for broadcast as part of the network's children's programming. It's hard enough to sell to the CBC, it's hard enough to sell children's programming, and it's almost impossible to finance an animation studio. But there's Al, smiling.

Festivals

OTTAWA 76. It's the season for major Canadian film festivals, whether, like Ottawa 76, in actual operation, or in the planning stages. And if you're at Ottawa 76 or reading this note while the festival is on in early August, you'll get more details in a further report. Suffice it to say that the two-part fest — features and animation — has a powerhouse line-up. The entire festival, and the feature section in particular, was opened by Joyce Weiland's *The Far Shore* on August 5, and several Canadian premieres of international films followed. Then the International Animation Festival begins on the tenth. Under the sponsorship of ASIFA (the international association of animators), the competition attracted 400 entries for preselection by a five-person jury. About 125 films became finalists, to be screened from August 10-15, along with out-of-competition films and several features. Also part of the program are student workshops with 150 beginning animators attending, a seminar and screening led by ASIFA President John Halas, and other events.

STRATFORD. First, as they say, the bad news. As you probably know by now, the Stratford Film Festival has been cancelled for this year. Stratford says only this year's festival has been called off, because of a drop in expected financial support



Gerald Pratley

from the federal Festivals Bureau and from the Ontario government. But it's more complex than that, and festival director Gerald Pratley received a great shock and insult when he returned from Cannes to be bluntly informed there would be no festival this year. He was not consulted during its final moments.

It had already been rescheduled to later in October to allow more revenue for Avon Theatre stage shows, which, unlike past years, were booming at the box office. The Film Festival was always a fifth wheel at Stratford, and while considered outsiders, the Film Festival people carried on because of support from William Wylie, Stratford general manager. But Wylie died recently and new manager Bruce Swerdfager, while insisting that the festival would survive, never seemed to place his efforts properly to support it. Last year, too, Ontario set up a new branch of government to oversee culture. Originally the Tourism department picked up the deficit, about \$8,000.

Tourism told Pratley, et al., to go to Culture for funds, but at Culture was Deputy Minister Malcolm Rowan. He said Tourism should pay, and then Tourism sent them back to Culture, except that Rowan had now been replaced by a new man. Swerdfager said he knew the new boy and would set things up. Fine, said Pratley, and left for Cannes. While he was away, the Stratford Board of Directors met and canned the Film Festival. Pratley, of course, is bitter. He had Satyajit Ray, as well as his opening and closing films booked. And while Stratford has been considered less than necessary in the scheme of things, mainly because of its relatively small attendance and disregard for Canadian films, Pratley was treated shabbily. Also insulted was that audience, because although it is small and relatively esoteric, it has always been

loyal, and that's more than many festivals can boast.

CFA. About ninety miles away, in Toronto, October is starting to heat up with festival activity. First, details are coming out regarding this year's Canadian Film Awards. Chairman Nat Taylor has secured the services of Patricia Thompson as director and Gerald Pratley as returning jury chairman. He has also moved the festival site back to Toronto and arranged for a CFA first, a major national telecast by CTV, on Sunday, October 24. The awards will be presented in CTV studios and the finalists will be screened, on the Monday to Thursday previous in the Toronto Dominion Cinema. Producer for CTV will be Bill Davidson and director will be variety veteran Mike Steele. Entry deadline is September 1 and film deadline September 15. Forms are now available from festival offices at 175 Bloor Street East, Toronto M4T 1C8. Taylor is now trying to squeeze some money out of the Secretary of State's Festivals Bureau, and is negotiating French participation.

FESTIVAL OF FESTIVALS.

Of course, if you're going to have a major festival, since Canada has so many, hold it simultaneously with another. Better still, have it in the same city. Which is exactly what Bill Marshall, film producer and general promoter, is doing with his Festival of Festivals. It is true that he was there first, for he booked Ontario Place as his site and announced dates — October 18-24 — while everyone still wondered whether there would be a Film Awards again this year. And he claims some all-star events and people for this selection of the best from world festivals. His publicity has been appropriately lavish, even featuring Secretary of State Hugh Faulkner appearing for a press conference to announce a \$19,500 grant from the Festivals Bureau. To add to the \$350,000 Marshall needs, he has received \$5,000 from the City of Toronto Cultural Advisory Corporation and \$5,000 from the Metro Toronto Olympic fund. In addition, he's landed Harbour Castle Hotel as resident residence and lots of free travel from Air Canada; to both he has given prominence in all the Festival's written material. Wintario is shying away from him now, but we'll see.

Marshall expects 200 to 300 films for showings, to run during the day and at special theme-evening presentations. Daily programming includes films from Italy (12 features new to North America, complete with stars and directors); the Academy Award-winning **Dersu Uzala** from Russia; two Czech features; a program of young German cinema; and producers' conferences and filmcraft workshops and seminars with the likes of George Barrie, Sergio Leone, Martin Scorsese and a team from the ABC Movie of the Week. The point about film festivals, though, is that usually the films to be shown are not confirmed until the last minute, and so Marshall may be jumping the gun. More news as it happens.

CFTA. Later, on November 5, at a luncheon at Toronto's Hyatt Hotel, the Canadian Film and Television Association will award its annual prizes for non-government-made industrial and sponsored films. Dick Smith of Kodak is award chairman, and he announces that plans are to project three finalists in each category, at a location to be set on November 4. Categories include Public Relations, Sales Promotion, Travel and Recreation, Nature and Wildlife, Sports, Educational and Instructional, TV Information, Sponsored Theatrical Shorts, as well as craft awards, for which all entries are eligible. Films must be over three minutes, satisfy CRTC Canadian content rules, and be made after July 1, 1975, in 16 mm, 35 mm, or VTR. September 3 is the deadline, and you can get more information from the CFTA at Suite 512, 55 York Street, Toronto M5J 1S2, or from Mike Smith at Bonded Services International, 205 Richmond Street West, Toronto, M5V 1V5.

KUDOS. In the kudo division, the National Film Board received several awards at the American Film Festival in New York in June. Evelyn Lambert's **Story of Christmas** won a Blue Ribbon in the Religion and Society category; Rupert Glover and Michel Patenaude's **The Light Fantastic** won a Blue Ribbon in the Art and Culture category; Michael Scott and Marvin Cannell's **Whistling Smith** won a Red Ribbon in the Human Concerns category; Dorothy Todd Henault's **The New Alchemists** won a Red Ribbon in the Environment cate-

gory. Outside the NFB but at the same fest, Tony Douglas won a Red Ribbon for his **It's Not the Going Up That Hurts, It's the Coming Down**. Peter Rowe's **Horse Latitudes** was also screened at the fest.

Other Canadians at festivals include **Second Wind, Action**, and Michel Audy's **The House That Prevents One's Seeing the Town**, at the Sydney fest in early June; Peter Allies showing **BTO** to the MPL Film Seminar in late July at Memphis State University; a presentation of York University second and third-year films at the Ontario Art Gallery in May; and an award for BC's best at the North West Film and Video Festival in Portland, Oregon, in early August.

Coming up is the Third Annual Alberta Film Festival from September 20 to 22; Films of the World, for the Peace of the World, a festival of shorts to be held in Leipzig from November 20 to 27; the Cannes International Amateur Festival from August 28 to September 5; the XVIII International Documentary and Shorts Festival in Bilbao, Spain, from November 29 to December 4. Information on entering any of these foreign events can be obtained from the Film Festivals Bureau, 66 Slater St., Ottawa, Suite 1822.

More kudos at the US Industrial Film Festival in Chicago in April, the largest of its kind in the world; in the government-produced section of the Medicine and Health category, the NFB's **Smoking/Emphysema: A Fight for Breath** was best; in the History and Biography category, commercially produced section, Imperial Oil's **The Great Canadian Energy Saga** was best, and in the commercially produced section of the Travel and Geography category, New Horizon Film Productions' **The Gift of Water** was best; in the government-produced section of History and Biography, **Rendezvous** by the Ministry of Natural Resources of Ontario was best. And a Canadian company sponsored the American-made film that won the overall top award: **A Walk in the Forest** won the Chairman's Special Award.

Besides that typical Canadian move, we have a typical Canadian reaction. Barry Greenwald's **Metamorphosis**, the Cannes winner, has now been sold to Australia, New Zealand, England and, of course, to the CBC.

Random Notes

CCFM. Although much of the basic information about the CCFM Annual General Meeting, held in Toronto in May, was included in Organization News last month, herewith some observations, as well as some information not included in that report.

The main impression gained from the meeting was that, unlike last year and before, when student council levels were maintained, this year's gathering was business first and foremost. Concrete reports on meetings by CCFM reps with provincial government people (Bill Boyle found a positive response in Saskatchewan), concrete political party news (the NDP agreed to bring a film policy up for discussion at the party's annual meeting in the summer, and that policy would advocate more government control, possibly a CRTC-type body), concrete and objective looks at CCFM goals by executive member Don Wilder, and so on. The presence of various heavies from the broadcasting establishment, such as Colin Watson of Metro Cable



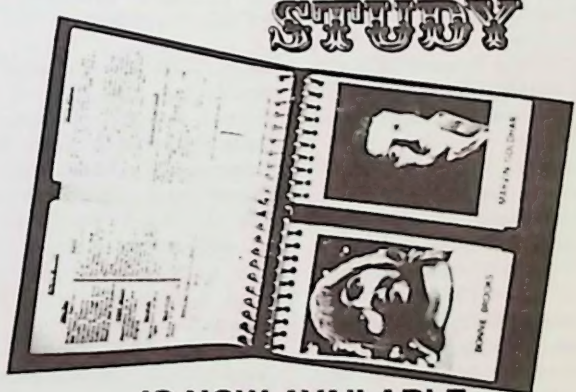
Mme. Jeanne Sauvé

TV and Moses Znaimer of CITY TV, was surprising. They were there, of course, to gain allies in their pay-TV ambitions; dangling the 15% of revenue for Canadian production carrot, they got support, although Znaimer remained silent.

Some facts out of the meeting, at random: Famous Players and Odeon have signed a written agreement regarding the "quota", but it's watered down; for example, Famous will apply it only in theatres the company owns outright, a great drop in numbers from the total including those they own part of or run as management. BC's continuing feeling of being in a separate

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country takes concrete form not only in the CFDC's half-hearted attempts to recognize its existence, but also within the film community at large and the CCFM; eventually they'll be forced to build a BC industry, with or without the rest of Canada. Pay TV will be the next hot item for CCFM rabble-rousers (it's about all that's left), and watch the chorus grow in the fall as hearings begin to be scheduled, even though Communications Minister Sauvé and CRTC Chairman Boyle have already indicated their basic nationalistic philosophy. And finally the presence of Robin Chetwynd, from the Canadian Film and Television Association, was an indication of the further level of respectability obtained by the CCFM. The next step is practicality in goals: proclaim processes that no government or member of the industry can reject.

DIRECTORS' GUILD held its annual general meeting in late June, and a new slate of officers and an executive was chosen. President is Chris Chapman, 1st Vice-President is John Trent, 2nd Vice-President is Don Wilder, Secretary is Don Buchsbaum, Treasurer is Bob Laffey, West Coast Rep is Darryl Duke (whose TV station is about to open), Montreal Rep is Charles Braive, Ottawa Rep is Peter Cock, National Executive Secretary is Evelyn McCartney, and Executive Officers are Jack Goodford, Peter Pearson, George Gorman, Karen Bromley, John Eckert, Bob Barclay and Gladys Richards.

A committee on pay-TV under Bob Barclay is preparing a brief, and a committee under John Trent will follow through with recommendations regarding the renewal of the CFDC mandate. Finally, and not unimportantly, the Guild has arranged to require foreign directors to go through Canada Manpower for a work permit, thus allowing the Guild to say whether a Canadian is available. Most of the effect of this ruling will be felt in commercials, but the CBC Drama Department has been bringing in foreigners with great regularity lately...

A FILM STUDIES ASSOCIATION was formed by several scholars in late spring. Its purpose is to foster and advance scholarship in the history and art of film and related fields and to aid educational personnel

in these areas. The membership is open to anyone teaching or studying film, or institutions involved in such endeavors. Plans include meetings, screenings, a newsletter, and national tours of filmmakers and scholars. First project is, with the Ontario Film Studies Association, to hold a gathering in Ottawa from November 12-14 on Canadian cinema in its historic context. Officers are Peter Morris, President, and Seth Feldman, Secretary Treasurer, and the executive committee is Marianne Stenbaek-Lafon, Peter Harcourt, David Ely and Ron Burnett.

LITERATI: The latest Index of 16 mm and 35 mm feature films available in Canada is now available for \$25 from the Canadian Federation of Film Societies. Nine thousand films and listings of directors, leading players, and companies' rights are included. Write P.O. Box 484, Terminal A, Toronto M5W 1E4... The BC Film Industry Association is preparing a manual for producers who wish to operate in the province, and the Ontario government has just published their version of the same help-tool... Micheline Lanctôt did the drawings for the translation of Gabrielle Roy's novel *Enchanted Summer*, to be published by McClelland and Stewart in the fall... The Catalogue Supplement is now available from the Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre in Toronto.

RESULTS: Distributor Linda Beath has sold ITV in Britain several Canadian films, among them *Paperback Hero*, *Rip Off*, *Between Friends* and *Goin' Down the Road*... Both the Juno and ACTRA Award shows garnered audiences of above 2.5 million, a rather large number when most Canadian shows struggle for a million...

Breaking Point, that ultimate co-production (commercial, had American lead, gave work here) opened in 40 Canadian and 400 American theatres and instantly died... The NFB has received about 900 scripts from about 650 women in its open request for women's scripts. Three judges, including Patricia Watson, will pick the best three for filming.

RECIPIENTS: Budge Crawley was the subject of a CFTA tribute on May 27 at the Royal York Hotel in Toronto. Convenors Harold Eady of the CFTA and Alex Stewart of the Variety Club

gathered the industry to honor Crawley on his film life and on receiving the Oscar. All proceeds went to the Variety Club... The Canada Council awarded grants to artists in early stages of their careers, worth up to \$7,000. Film winners were Colin Campbell of Toronto, Lisa Steele of Toronto, Brian MacNevin of Chester, Nova Scotia, and Don Drueck of Vancouver... Receiving an apology from showbiz weekly *Variety* was Barry Greenwald and the entire Canadian film industry. Seems the paper labelled Greenwald's Cannes winner "American". Of course in the same column of the issue where the apology appeared, Budge Crawley was labelled "American" (in a quote from the Japanese skier, who said he liked Crawley's job on the film better than the original Japanese producer) ... Broadcasting pioneer Graham Spry (father of Robin) was awarded an honorary degree at the spring graduation of York University in Toronto. *Red Sunday*, the Montana Bicentennial film shown regularly at Little Big Horn, was written, partially shot, edited and mixed in Toronto by a Canadian company, Mountain Giraffe Films-in-Motion... CTV broadcast a July festival of Canadian features, all old acquisitions but right there in prime time, including *Paperback Hero*, *Face-Off*, and *Across This Land*... On CBC's *Sprockets*, revived for the summer, Peter Bryant's *Deal* and Alan Eastman's *Deus ex Machina* were shown... Harris Kirschenbaum



Peter Bryant

of the Canadian Film Institute is looking for films to take to New York for his second trip to screen for American distributors. A sale from the first round seems imminent, and his next journey will be in November... *Clown Murders* played in Toronto in July.

THE LAW: Emmanuelle has been ruled not obscene in Edmonton. Victors were Odeon Mid-Western Theatres. The Alberta Supreme Court said the film

has no genital obsession, nor does it go beyond community standards... the CRTC told CTV to improve the amount of Canadian content it shows, especially in drama... Three full-time commissioners were appointed to the CRTC recently: law professor Jeanne LaSalle, broadcaster Roy Faibish, and Jean-Louis Gagnon, former head of Information Canada... On the West Coast, the CFDC has yet to appoint a local rep. Critic Les Wedman was suggested by the film community but his newspaper felt it might be a conflict of interest, so the industry suggested Mark Rose. No word on his acceptance yet.

THE REST: The CBC has finally been granted a five-year budget, thus allowing the corporation to plan further in advance. Almost immediately it announced more buildings and hardware: an 11-studio production in Regina for TV and radio in English and French. Local studios are nonexistent... Des Loftus is now Director General of the CRTC's Broadcast Operations Branch... Morley Markson has spent the past academic year teaching at San Francisco State... Former booker and manager Robert Yeoman has been appointed Executive Assistant to Odeon President H.T. Blumson... *Les ordres*, picked up by Contemporary Films of London, will open there this summer... Jack Crane, former radio chief, was named holder of a new upper echelon CBC post, that of Network Programming Director, with duties for the English network.

Night of the High Tide is currently filming in Italy. It's an Italian-Canadian co-production produced by Fulvio Lucisano of Italian International Films and Harry Alan Towers of Canada. Pic is directed by Luigi Scattini and stars those Italian favorites Annie Belle, Anthony Steele, and Pamela Greer.

THE ULTIMATE END - you can't win department: After a story on the quota and production situation in our beloved industry, one of the beloved potential audience wrote *The Globe and Mail* berating the industry for its obsession with violence. Naming several titles, such as *Death Weekend* and *Clown Murders*, to illustrate his opinion, he included the title *Why Shoot the Teacher?* as an example of a title whose violent content speaks for itself.

Stephen Chesley

ONTARIO

NATIONAL FILM BOARD Regional Office, opened in Toronto in late spring, is beginning to show signs of life. Executive Producer Don Hopkins and Program Development Producer Beryl Fox attended the CCFM Annual General Meeting to answer



Beryl Fox photo Stephen Chesley

questions from the film community, and in June released a statement of objectives after further meetings with the local filmmakers. First priorities are to improve NFB Ontario programming, to increase local industry support, and to contribute to development of talent. Basic format to be used is the documentary short, and the focus will be on local themes and heritage. Planned also are a theatrical shorts program celebrating Canadian events and popular culture, and a film clip program on conservation for children. Drama is not forgotten; Janine Manatis is running a summer seminar for actors, writers and directors of professional calibre, held three nights a week.

TV ONTARIO notes two new achievements. One is the addition of transmitters for Chatham and Windsor, thus adding 500,000 viewers to audience potential. And the network has landed an exclusive showing, set for fall, of a BBC hour interview with Solzhenitsyn... Ryerson's photo arts department held a three-week summer seminar at the Blue Mountain Lodge on Georgian Bay. Subject was Media and Communication and resource people worked with the 30 people who paid \$210 to attend; enrollment was restricted to that number to increase personal involvement.

TORONTO FILMMAKERS' CO-OP, facing increased gov-

ernment pressure to act on new funding guidelines even though they're only rumours at this time, is making physical changes to upgrade its centre and receive revenue from facilities. A refurbished screening room will be rented out, a sound transfer system has been obtained, as well as a Xerox machine. Plans are to carry on with the valuable and well-received workshops again this fall, as well as a revival of a Co-op-run cable TV show. At the same time the Co-op was informed that its City of Toronto grant was cut in half, and their bid for a Metro Toronto grant was unsuccessful.

ONTARIO ARTS COUNCIL announced senior and junior grants to filmmakers. Receiving senior grants, worth up to \$10,000, were Michael Barnes, Tad Jaworski, Julius Kohanyi,



Julius Kohanyi

Paul Mackan, Larry Nelson, Kim Ondaatje, Peter Rowe, Paul Shapiro, Cameron Tingley, Eric Wraite, Leonard Yakir, and Sam Firestone.

Junior grants, worth up to \$3000, were awarded to David Anderson, C. Babin, Anthony Bliss, Peter Cooke, Ivo Christante, Richard Dobrucki, Timothy Eaton, Edwina Frankford, David Fulton, Raymond Gallon, John Gray, A. Khandwani, David Leach, Lorne Levy, Rory McLean, Peter Maynard, Marilyn Mueller, Tom New, Jaan Pill, Michael Posin, David Springbett, Paul Stephens and Eric Jordan, Sudda Thakkar, C.R. Wrench, Peter Wronski, and Rebecca Yates... And the OAC, along with the CFDC and last year's leader Stanley Colbert (now chief of film production for CBC drama) hope to run the screenwriters' course again this fall.

Stephen Chesley

QUEBEC

INSTITUT. The members of the Institut de cinéma québécois have been named by the minister of communications, Denis Hardy. These appointees were chosen from lists submitted by the responsible associations (each association suggested three names). The members are as follows: producers - Guy Fournier, directors - Jean Dansereau, distributors - Rock Demers, exhibitors - Paul Gendron, technicians and actors - François Protat. The first meeting of the Institut will take place on August 12. After concluding a contract with the ministry of communications, the Institut will be responsible for administering \$4 million which should go to all sectors of the film industry in Quebec.

SNC-APFQ: Negotiations between the Syndicat national du cinéma and the Association des producteurs de films du Québec were broken off by a vote of the general assembly of the SNC on July 15 as they refused the interim contract which had been offered to the technicians, after negotiation, for the period covering the Olympics. Efforts are being made by both sides to impose employment conditions, and the APFQ reiterates constantly its desire to negotiate a settlement. Feelings are running high and, as of August 2, any technician who works without a SNC contract is to be excluded from the union. Nevertheless, members of the APFQ are managing to shoot - though, they admit, under less than optimal conditions - and have guaranteed those working with them that they will not sign a collective agreement with the SNC if the technicians who are now at work are excluded from the union. So far, the producers have not signed the contracts.

CANCELLED. Les Productions Prisma was the first and hardest hit of the Montreal production companies. Because of the union conflict it was obliged to cancel a low-budget feature by André Melançon, *Les six doigts de la main*. The CFDC had already invested \$90,000 in this children's film. A second feature, scheduled to begin in late August, is seriously compromised and may have to be cancelled. Called *Nous som-*

mes tous les propriétaires, the film was written and was to be directed by Fernand Dansereau.

Connie Tadros

ELIZA - After a 10-week run in the Unitarian Church on Sherbrooke Street in downtown Montreal, *Eliza's Horoscope* will reopen in a Montreal cinema this fall. Fall openings are also planned for Vancouver, Toronto, New York and San Francisco.

Gordon Sheppard, who produced and directed *Eliza's Horoscope* and whose company O-Zali Films is distributing it, says the church opening was calculated to surround the film with the appropriate atmosphere and to draw attention to it. "The film comes out of anonymity... people want the director's credentials before they'll accept a film of the magnitude of *Eliza's Horoscope*."

Though Sheppard will not disclose box office receipts he says the arrangement was financially successful. Tickets cost a competitive \$3.50. On sale at a counter in the vestibule of the church were *Eliza's Horoscope* posters, in English and French, postcards and Rainbow glasses.

Members of the Board of the First Unitarian Church of Montreal agreed to rent the church after casting a narrow majority vote. The screenings, however, caused dissension among members of the congregation, some of whom objected in principle to the commercial use of the church sanctuary.

The church was decorated with astrology masks, from the orgy scene in the film, and cedar boughs. The screenings (one late showing six nights a week) were preceded by a short theatrical presentation: two masked and gowned figures dedicated the film to various parts of Montreal. Sheppard appeared in a clown's mask, gesturing over a candle and inviting his audience to view the film.

He plans to hold on to the distribution rights of the film until someone offers him a substantially better distribution deal than those received prior to the successful church run.

Joan Irving

THE PRAIRIES

EDMONTON. Contrary to the rumors that one hears circulate in the East, business in Alberta – in northern Alberta, at any rate – is very slow. Production started about two months behind the usual annual date, and there is significantly less of it this year than in previous years. Freelancers complain bitterly about the shortage of work and talk about selling their equipment – but, they ask, to whom? – and small companies are trying to hide from bankruptcy. The situation in the south is a little better, of course, because of the number of features that have been produced down there; but these bonanzas have little effect on the smaller production houses.

So far as I know only two companies in Edmonton, Filmwest and Century II, are engaged in major production, the former completing a series of short films for the Workers Compensation Board, and the latter doing a fair amount of work for the Alberta Education and Communications Corporation, ACCESS, among other things. The rest, if they have anything other than bits and pieces, post-production work and the odd salvage job, are like Interquack and Vérité Film, which have modest contracts at various stages of completion. Interquack having a couple of series of commercials and Vérité having just received the first answer print for *The Arab Jews*, a half-hour political documentary.

ACCESS. In addition to the overall contraction of the market there is still a problem with ACCESS. Earlier in the year there was an apparent change in attitude by the crown corporation, so much so that they announced, loudly, a continuation of their policy to contract out work to the private sector wherever possible. Comparatively speaking, quite a lot of service rather than production work was distributed – very little of the production work at rates much better than \$200 per minute of finished film. Now there seems to be

some backsliding. There is increasing evidence, I am informed by people close to the organization, that ACCESS is doing business where it has no business to be; a situation that has led the Better Business Bureau to voice its concerns in a letter to the Premier, Mr. Lougheed.

AMPIA. However, even if the producers themselves are less busy than they would like to be, the Alberta Motion Picture Industry Association, AMPIA, has kept itself occupied. Having organized its two very successful seminars, the sound and cinematography seminars, it has now turned its attention to late summer and early fall activities. AMPIA's secretary, Len Stahl, informs me that work is proceeding steadily on the organization of an International Convention of Filmmakers, which will take place at Devon, Alberta, between July 31 and August 2, the three days immediately prior to the Commonwealth Games. In addition, the Alberta Film Festival and Awards will be held in the Edmonton Inn in September.

NFB. Otherwise we have had only the pleasure of the official western premiere of Filmwest's production of *Great Grand Mother* for the NFB, which took place at the Provincial Museum on July 20. The film, for which Ma Diva Mugda, Lorna Rasmussen, Bob Reese and Ken Pappes were primarily responsible, is a product of Studio D at the Board, which was set up for the express purpose of training women filmmakers and dealing with women's concerns. *Great Grand Mother* is a visual 'history' of the struggles, aspirations, burdens and successes of the pioneer women of the West, constructed from live interview material, old photographs, and dramatic mock-ups. It is, for the most part, a rather satisfying article.

Peter Haynes

WEST COAST

photo Alan Zenuk



Jan-Michael Vincent and Teri York in *Shadow of the Hawk*

HAWK – The dust is still settling after the completion of John Kemeny's International Cinemedia Center's production of *Shadow of the Hawk*. The ambitious \$2 million suspense drama which began filming in March in and around Vancouver was not without its share of internal drama.

There was, alas, the seasonal climate to contend with. Springtime on the mainland did not easily lend itself to the many exterior stunts, chases, falls, car crashes, and special effects called for in the action-packed script.

Grappling with the elements was a sizeable film crew from all points of the continent which was subject to severe bouts of heavy turnover. George McCowan was the final director of the action, director Daryl Duke having parted company with the Hawk in April. Assistant directors included Jim Scott and Ron Schuery. Bob Linnell served as production manager. Cinematographer Philip Lathrop replaced Richard Glouner who had succeeded Reg Morris at the post.

The actors (who remained relatively constant) include Jan-Michael Vincent, who starred in Kemeny's previous box office hit for Columbia Pictures, *White Line Fever*, Marilyn Hassett,

best known for her performance in *The Other Side of the Mountain*, and British Columbia's own Chief Dan George as "Old Man Hawk."

Also featured are Pia Shandel, as Jan-Michael's girlfriend, and national women's diving champion Teri York, appearing as a "grotesque, disembodied specter sent by an evil sorceress to drown Jan-Michael Vincent." The evil sorceress is played by Marianne I Heard the Owl Call My Name Jones.

The screenplay was written by Norman Thaddeus Vane and Herbert Wright. Paul Horn provided the musical score for the present-day suspense yarn heavily laced with mysticism.

SKIP TRACER – Meanwhile, the slack in local feature production will be taken up by an independent film tentatively called *Skip Tracer*, which will begin its shooting schedule August 30. *Skip Tracer* is the story of that modern-day civil vigilante known as the bill collector.

David Petersen, a local stage actor, will be making his film debut in the title role as a loan officer/collector for a finance company. Petersen is a member of the Tamahuous Theatre Company which will also provide many of the bit players.

Zale Dalen, who wrote the original screenplay, will direct the film. Dalen has previously written, directed, and edited several short films, including *Gandy Dance* and *Granny's Quits* which is currently doing big bicentennial business in the United States. He is also credited as sound recorder on three Canadian features: *Wolfpen Principle*, *Sally Fieldgood & Co.*, and, most recently, *The Keeper*.

"When I started writing the script two years ago," Zale recalled, "it was to be a detective 'B' movie. Now it has evolved to something between *The Conversation* and *Performance*."

Laara Dalen is the producer of *Skip Tracer* for Highlight Studios, with special investment assistance from the CFDC. Ron Orioux will be squinting through the camera and Rick Patton will do sound recording.

Tom Braidwood has written the theme song for the feature and Fiona Jackson is currently casting for the supporting roles. The \$145,000 budget will include a 20 to 24-day shoot on 48 different locations around Vancouver.



Vancouver Pacific Celebration

NEW HORIZON - Also making the most of Vancouver locations are Bob Rodvik and Mike Col-

lier, alias New Horizon Films. From the Gulf Island waterways to the Grouse Mountain skiways, it's all part of a new travel film, *Vancouver Pacific Celebration*. Completed in April, the short recently garnered the Canuck Award for best travel film from the Travel Industry Association of Canada. The producers are currently negotiating with the federal government for world-wide distribution of their 20-minute work which they expect will become the official Vancouver promotional film.

Vancouver Pacific Celebration focuses mainly on sports and recreation activities in the lower mainland. Commerce is represented in the grand opening of Gastown, and industry is shown engaging in its favourite urban pastime, constructing new buildings.

Keith Cutler drafted the

script, which is narrated by Art Hives, and Ralph Dyck composed an original music score for the \$22,000 film.

Rodvik, producer/cinematographer, and Collier, director/sound recorder/editor, comprise a two-man production team that produced last year's award-winning nature short, *The Gift of Water*, the first film to be produced under the banner of New Horizon Films. The duo is currently working on an educational nature and wildlife film that chronicles the life cycle within a marsh area employing macro-photography and the exclusive use of natural sound effects recorded on location.

Rodvik is also working on a feature film script which he anticipates shooting next spring.

Gayle Scott

THE OCTOBER CRISIS

If you want to hold a festival in Canada this year, you might have some problems in setting a date, but you won't have any problem knowing when *not* to hold it. If you stay away from mid-September through October, your competition is almost non-existent. During that period at least five festivals - even considering the suspension of Stratford's this year - will be held in the Toronto or Montreal regions, some simultaneously. All but two are international. The exceptions are the Student Film Awards and, alas, the Canadian Film Awards.

Festivals in Canada are funded in part by the Secretary of State's Festivals Bureau. They must not be student festivals (thus eliminating from Bureau funding the Student Festival held in Montreal in late September) and they must be international, except for a "national celebration of Canadian film", i.e., The Canadian Film Awards. And to receive any funds you must of course apply.

At this writing in mid-July, despite enthusiasm and energy on the part of the CFA Committee, and especially chairman Nat Taylor, the CFA has been pushed into a position of direct competition with another major festival; has yet to receive funds from the Festivals Bureau because of incomplete negotiations regarding French participation and a missed deadline of July 1; and, unkindest cut of all, has had the publicity rug pulled out from under it by the Secretary of State himself.

Bill Marshall, producer and promoter, has blasted his Festival of Festivals all over the entertainment sections and gossip columns. A strong line-up of foreign premieres, Hollywood openings, and filmpeople guests announced to date implies that Marshall has potentially a great week planned for filmgoers at Toronto's Ontario Place from October 18 to 24. And so it should be. He has, in addition, received \$19,500 from the Festivals Bureau for what Hugh Faulkner proclaimed, in a Toronto cheque-presenting press conference, his "act of bravado" in setting up such a gala event.

Meanwhile the CFA determined that this year's effort must be moved back to Toronto from last year's scenic but somewhat inaccessible Niagara-on-the-Lake location. Furthermore, it's a good move, because last year's awards were impressive and really seemed to be getting back on

their feet after the destructive upheaval of 1973. Taylor even used his industry connections and considerable persuasiveness to convince CTV to broadcast the final award ceremonies. The goals of greater public participation through attendance and mass public awareness through TV (award ceremonies, no matter what they salute, draw huge ratings) seemed within reach.

The next step was timing. Before October everyone is shooting film; after October is dead for filmgoing because of Toronto's damp weather and the onset of Christmas. Voila, October! Even the assault of festival publicity from other areas, the intense competition from new films opening in late September, as well as from theatre season beginnings and TV premieres, all these were obstacles that could be surmounted. But both festivals culminate on October 24!

With more festivals being held than ever before in Canada, and with government cutbacks, every festival gets less from the public purse, and all are worthy. The scramble for private funds, too, becomes more intense. Not to mention CFA preselection inequities, and other sore spots of past years. The odds, then, are great against a stronger festival than in the past.

How, then, does one explain the exact, simultaneous dates of the Film Awards and Marshall's festival? How, then, does one explain the Secretary of State's publicity effort for Marshall, when, despite his expressed devotion to biculturalism and Canadian identity, he has never before made a public statement about the Canadian Film Awards?

And finally, how do you overcome the lack of past support by the industry for the Film Awards, support necessary to build confidence in our filmmaking abilities, convince the public that they should be proud of Canadian film efforts, and inspire beginning filmmakers to work in Canada to improve themselves and the industry at the same time? Not to mention media support in Toronto, where some obscure belly dancer in Pago Pago rates space while Canadian culture is thoroughly neglected in the *Star*, *Globe and Mail*, and radio and TV outlets?

The task is formidable, to say the least. And this year, it's more essential than ever to make sure the show goes on.

Stephen Chesley

TECH NEWS

by Rodger J. Ross

HOME VIDEO SYSTEMS

A tantalizing prospect for the emerging visual communications industry is the development – and widespread public acceptance – of a home video system that can be sold in stores like record players. Several different types of equipment are already available that allow users to show pictures on their television sets. These machines can be divided into two main categories – (a) magnetic, and (b) optical-electronic. Magnetic systems make use of videotape as the storage medium. In the optical-electronic category super-8 film carries the pictures, and a scanning system converts the film images into video signals that are then carried by a cable to the television receiver. A third category, still in the development stage, is the videodisc. Of course, all of these systems are capable of reproducing sound along with the pictures.

Many different makes of relatively inexpensive videotape machines have appeared on the market in the past few years utilizing magnetic tape in various widths down to 1/4-in. Large numbers of these machines have been sold, mainly for use in business, industry and education, but in the vitally important home market the response has been negligible. In spite of the most strenuous marketing efforts by the electronics industry, magnetic systems have not been accepted by the public for home use.

In 1973 the Eastman Kodak Co. introduced their film videoplayer. This semi-automatic playback machine accepts super-8 film in cassettes or on standard 8 mm projection reels. The player can be operated at either 18 or 20 frames/sec., as well as freeze-frame and single-frame advance. Video output is a fully interlaced composite NTSC color signal that can be reproduced in any television receiver on either Channels 2 or 3, through an

isolating switch connected to the antenna terminals.

It is too early to make even a guess as to whether the film videoplayer will have more success in the home market than videotape machines. The question could well be asked at this stage: What considerations are likely to influence prospective purchasers of home video equipment to select one system over another or reject both?

Undoubtedly cost is a major consideration. The Kodak film videoplayer is priced at about \$1200, and there are several small videotape machines on the market with color capability starting at about \$1500. Some would say that these rather high price tags will put a damper on sales in the home market. But then top-of-the-line color television receivers are selling not far below the \$1000 mark, and many thousands have been purchased with only the prospect of showing the programs available from broadcasting stations or cable TV hookups. The home videoplayer is intended to make available to viewers a much greater range of programming in much the same way that music records add another dimension to home audio systems. It is in this particular area that the film videoplayer offers the most obvious advantages.

Manufacturers of videotape machines state in their sales promotions that pre-recorded cassettes can be played back into any TV set. However, there are as yet no readily available sources of such pre-recorded programs suitable for use in home video systems. Instead, emphasis is put on the advantages of being able to make original recordings on inexpensive, reusable magnetic tape. But to do that, a machine with record capability is needed, together with a television camera to generate the video signals, and a fairly extensive range of accessories. Even the simplest editing techniques call for the use of two machines, and copies can be made only by playing back the edited original on one machine and making a new recording on another. These additional facilities can increase the cost of a home video system considerably.

One of the unresolved – and most serious – problems in videotape is

the lack of a standard recording format for the lower-cost helical scan machines. Manufacturers continue to put on the market their own individual machine designs, taking different tape widths. For the user, this means that a recording made on one machine cannot be played back on another unless it is of the same type. Other playback difficulties might be mentioned also, such as faulty synchronizing pulses (the electronic equivalent of film perforations) that make the television picture displays jittery and sometimes cause complete picture breakups.

The film videoplayer will accept any existing super-8 film made anywhere in the world. This is made possible by the universal acceptance of motion picture standards formulated by the industry. Any other manufacturers contemplating the marketing of film videoplayers would have to design their machines to conform with the standards for the super-8 film format.

Copies of any existing 35 or 16 mm film can be made in the super-8 format by an optical printing process. Many commercial motion picture laboratories have facilities for doing this kind of work. Mass production printing processes have been designed to turn out super-8 prints at the rate of 600 feet or more per minute, complete with magnetic sound tracks. Already there are many sources from which super-8 prints can be purchased or rented, in a wide variety of subject areas.

Even more intriguing for the home user is the possibility of being able to make original super-8 programs using his own simple and inexpensive equipment. A great variety of super-8 cameras can be seen in photographic stores in a price range from \$200 to \$1500. Almost all of these cameras have been designed around the standard 50-foot super-8 film cartridge. Recently Eastman Kodak Co. put on the market super-8 film with a magnetic stripe for the sound, loaded in cartridges, and several manufacturers are producing cameras with sound recording capability.

For the home user the simplest procedure is to use Kodachrome film in the camera. After exposure in the camera, the film cartridge is return-

Longtime Supervisor of Technical Film Operations at the programming centre of the CBC, Mr. Ross is the author of two books, Television Film Engineering and Color Film for Color Television, and has just won the Agfa-Gevaert Gold Medal, awarded by the Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers.

ed by mail to the manufacturer for processing. Alternatively, Ektachrome film can be used in the camera and processed by a nearby commercial motion picture laboratory.

After the film has been processed it can be edited with a simple, inexpensive set-up consisting of a hand-operated optical viewer and a splicer. More elaborate – and costly – editing tables are available for more ambitious super-8 production projects. Copies of the edited originals can be made by many film laboratories with super-8 printing facilities.

An important additional advantage of super-8 film is that it can be projected directly on a screen with a relatively inexpensive optical projector, as well as being played back into a television receiver with a film videoplayer. There are many super-8 projectors on the market with sound reproducing capability in the \$200 to \$300 range.

The videodisc is being hailed by promoters as the next stage in the

visual communications revolution. Several videodisc developments have already been announced, but there are still no clear indications which system will emerge the winner, or whether videodiscs will go the way of the once highly touted EVR, into limbo. The videodisc is an intriguing invention, but entry into the home market will depend upon the cost of the player, availability of pre-recorded programs on discs, ease and reliability of operation and, perhaps, the possibility of the home user making his own disc recordings. Of course, if the videodisc does win out in the home market, both videotape and film programs can be transferred to videodiscs for distribution, opening up immense new markets.

For the near future at least, the optical-electronic system utilizing super-8 film appears to offer the best prospects, not only for manufacturers and distributors, but for the producers of programs for the home market as well. With large-scale public accept-

ance – i.e., sales in the millions – the cost of film videoplayers might be expected to come down below \$1000. It may be possible to produce super-8 prints 20 minutes in length for less than \$10 in large runs for mass distribution. With an investment in super-8 production equipment of \$500 to \$1000, the home user should be able to make his own programs for perhaps \$2 per minute – more, of course, for higher original shooting ratios and more elaborate production projects.

All that is needed now is for the idea to catch fire in the home market, the way color television took off in the mid-1960s. Before that, most people were content to watch television programs on black-and-white sets. The day may not be far off when viewers become so dissatisfied with broadcast and cable television that they will start looking around for alternatives. When that day arrives the new visual communications industry should be ready to give them almost anything they want in the way of program variety. □

EQUIPMENT NEWS

Note to Canadian distributors: We would like to include the names and addresses of Canadian distributors of equipment and services mentioned in this section. Please ask your suppliers to give Canadian sources in their publicity releases. Ed.

New Daylight Color Film for Television

Kodak Canada announces that Eastman Ektachrome video news film 7239, balanced for daylight use, is now available in Canada.

Along with Eastman Ektachrome video news film 7240 (tungsten), this film offers news departments the flexibility of being able to use one film that can be exposed at various exposure ratings; 7239 is color-balanced for projection at 5400K.

This new film maintains the excellent quality of Kodak Ektachrome EF film 7241 (daylight); when shot at higher exposure ratings and force-processed, it exhibits significantly improved grain when compared with that film. The quality achievable with Eastman Ektachrome video news film 7239 (daylight), combined with the advantages of process VNF-1, makes it well suited to meet the needs of

those responsible for the gathering and dissemination of television news. Tentative data sheets on Eastman Ektachrome video news film 7239 (daylight) are available by writing to Kodak Canada, 3500 Eglinton Avenue West, Toronto, Ontario, M6M 1V3, Motion Picture Markets.

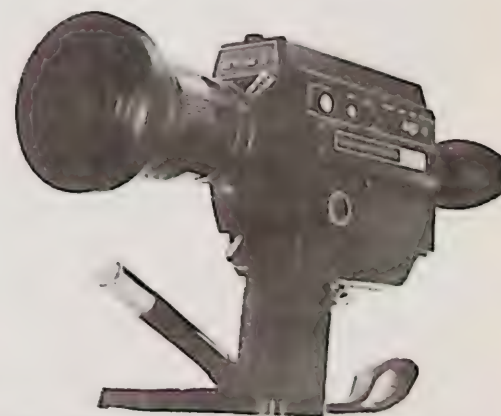
New From Elmo-Canada

Designed and engineered as the ultimate in low-light super-8 sound cameras, Elmo-Canada has introduced the Model 300SL as a companion to the already world-famous 6:1 Elmo Super-8 Sound 600S camera. The new 300SL model features an f/1.2, 9-27 mm zoom lens, including macro-focusing, and automatic level control with exclusive sound fade-in/out. A cue light automatically signals the person being photographed when the camera is running.

Another super-8 camera just introduced to the Canadian market by Elmo-Canada is the Elmo Super-8 Sound 1000S camera, incorporating the highest level of technology, complete ease of operation, and an ultra-quiet film drive. The acoustically encased film drive renders the camera virtually noise-free. A single touch simultaneously fades both sound

and picture either in or out, or fades sound only.

Elmo-Canada has introduced its finest super-8 sound projector, the Elmo ST-1200D, described as unsurpassed in sound and picture quality. Designed and engineered to meet the most exacting requirements of filmmakers, the ST-1200D includes a solid state amplifier, sound fade-in/out during double recording, 1200-foot film capacity, built-in counter, 15V-150W halogen lamp with cold mirror. Two models are available, for magnetic/optical tracks or for magnetic recording and reproduction.



Elmo Super-8 Sound 1000S

HISTORICAL NOTES by Peter Morris

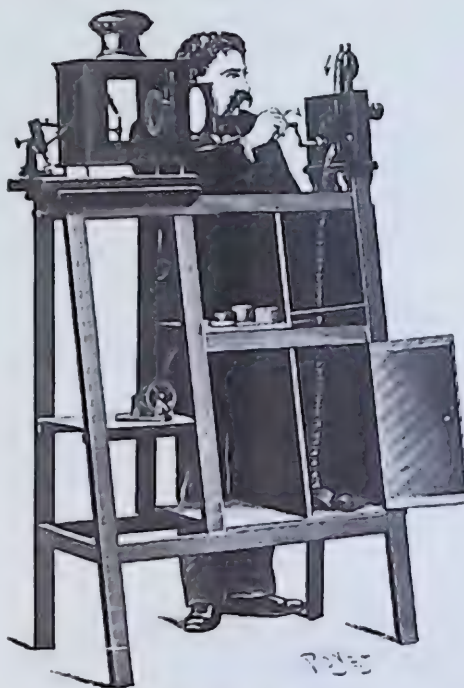
THE FIRST FILMS IN CANADA: THE TRUE STORY (2)

The following is a continuation of Mr. Morris' article begun in issue no. 29 of Cinema Canada.

Montreal

Given the substantial social impact of the movies over the past 80 years, it is perhaps a little surprising, in retrospect, to discover the newspaper editors did not greet the arrival of the movies with a furore of front-page headlines. Ottawans had to search the bottom of page seven to discover that first, anonymous, film review in July 1896. Toronto's newspapers buried their comments and reviews of the stage shows at Robinson's and the Exhibition. However, there *was* a sense of wonder at the new invention (albeit, only yet another marvel in a marvellous age) and audiences were reported to be "thrilled and delighted". In contrast, Montreal's French and English-language press hardly deigned to notice the new invention. Promoters, of course, touted their shows in paid advertisements but the newspapers eschewed comment and review, restricting themselves to simple, informative notes to the effect that "such and such a device was being shown at such a place". Perhaps the editors found movies vulgar and undignified, not a form of entertainment to be encouraged even by merely commenting on them. Or perhaps, more simply, they considered movies little more than a passing fad, already on the wane by the time they first appeared in Montreal. In any case, though Canada's largest urban centre was treated to almost every projection device on the market in the fall of 1896, they received bare passing mention by the Montreal press.

These devices included: the Kine-matographe at the Theatre Royal the week of September 28 (the movies were the last act, the "chaser", in a



Cinématographe Lumière

vaudeville program); the Animatographe at 2223 St. Catherine Street on September 30 and the Theatroscope at 58 St. Laurent on November 19. Later, in December, the Phantoscope opened at the Théâtre Français.

Among the interested spectators at those first film exhibitions in Montreal was a 19-year-old electrician, Ernest Ouimet, who was later to play a key role in the development of film in Canada. (Not only through the Ouimetscope, but by producing such key films as *The Scorching Flame* and *Sauvons nos bébés*.) Many years later, Ouimet recalled his first view of the movies but unfortunately confused dates and machines involved in a manner difficult to resolve. On the evidence, it is possible the exhibit Ouimet described was the Theatroscope at 58 St. Laurent (near Vitre) but, if so, not likely that it was the Lumière Cinématographe since Lumière's agents were under strict instructions to ensure the inventor's name was associated with every showing. Ouimet also suggested he saw the exhibit in the spring of 1896 and that "by the end of September or the beginning of October" the show-

ings were stopped — as soon as the cold weather arrived. Ouimet also said the equipment was sold to Sohmer Park and that showings took place there in the summer of 1896. No films were shown, in fact, at Sohmer Park until May 24, 1897 when the park reopened and advertised "The Riascope" film show.

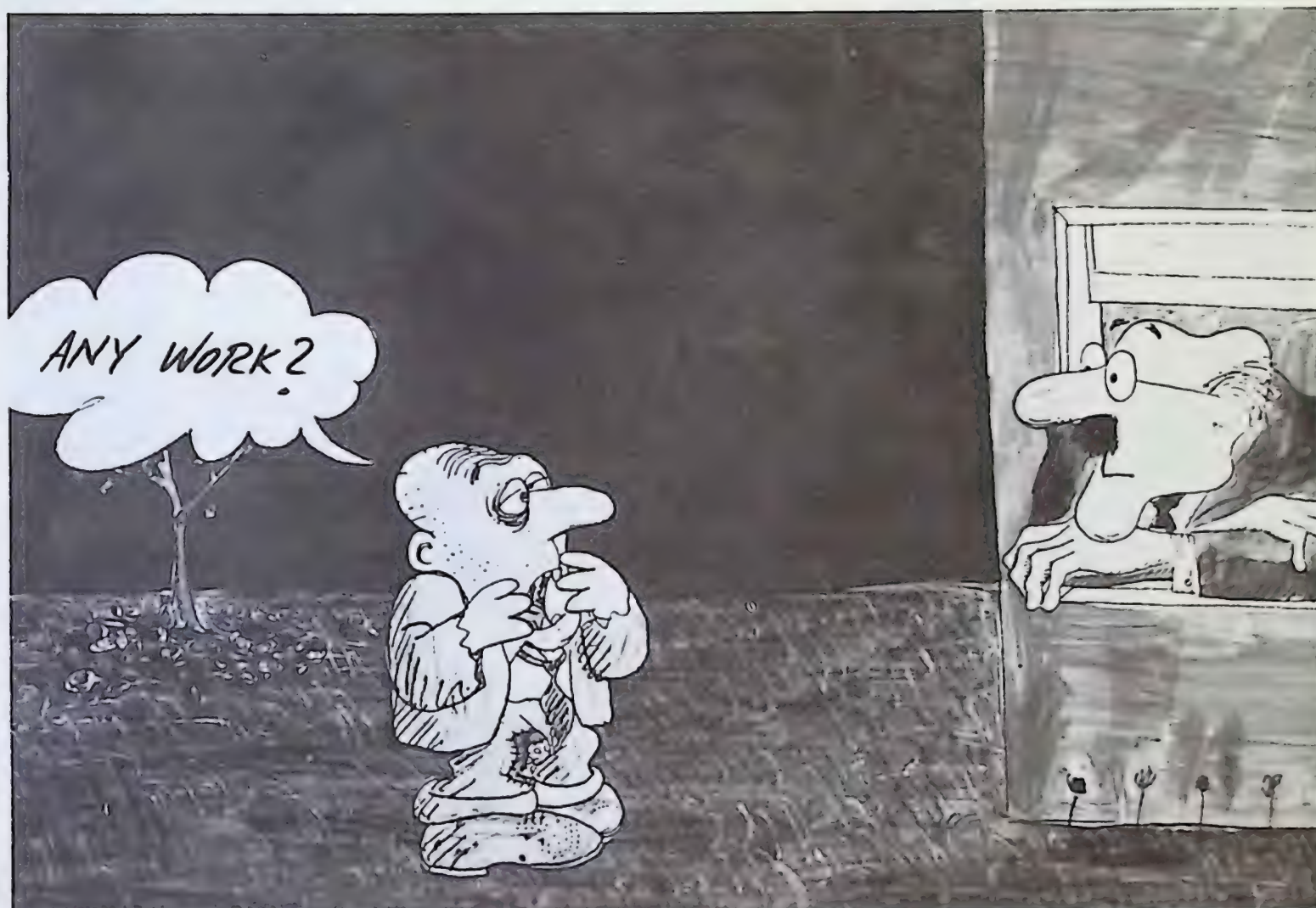
It is impossible Ouimet saw a Lumière exhibit in the spring of 1896. Though the Lumière Cinématographe had been first presented in public in Paris on December 28, 1895 (some months before Robert Paul's British Animatographe was shown in London and the Vitascope in New York), no machines were available in North America until late June, 1896. It was not that Lumière did not want to tap the American market. It was because, first, few machines had been constructed (and these were used in Europe) and, second, because Lumière insisted that exhibits be organized by his own representatives, personally trained by him as cameramen and projectionists. Unlike Edison, Lumière did not sell outright the territorial rights to his combined cameras and projectors. All presentations were organized directly by Lumière's agents in conjunction with a local promoter-exhibitor. The financial arrangement usually involved payment of a flat fee plus a percentage of the admission price. Once projectionists were trained in a particular area, the agent moved on to another town.

Félix Mesguich was the agent Lumière sent to North America. He arrived in mid-June and the Cinématographe opened in New York on June 29, 1896. Subsequently, he sat around waiting for the arrival of more machines and, later, toured the eastern States. He visited several Canadian cities in the fall of 1896 before returning to the USA, stopping off on the way to photograph — inevitably — Niagara Falls.

In summary, it seems likely Ouimet saw a Lumière exhibit (probably among others?) but, after sixty years, confused the dates, machines and places involved. Unless — or until — there is new evidence, that conclusion is inevitable. □

Peter Morris, after many years at the Canadian Film Institute, is presently working on a book entitled The History of Canadian Film, to be co-authored by Kirwan Cox. The above account is extracted from the book.

ANIMATION



From *Propaganda Message* by Don Arioli: National Film Board of Canada

The August issue of *Cinema Canada* is given over to the work of the animators and their companies in a salute to Ottawa 76, which brings a major animation festival to Canada for the first time. Ian Birnie, from the Art Gallery of Ontario, tells us about this festival and the one last year at Annecy in France.

Although we've left the National Film Board to fend for itself, Ron Blumer introduces us to Don Arioli whose work at the NFB is well known, and Don offers us a storyboard which was presented to the NFB and refused in 1970. Jaan Pill then tells us about animation in Toronto and Katherine Gilday talks with Al Guest, a survivor.

N'eema Lakin fills in the West Coast scene and Neil Warren talks about puppet films and working with plasticine. Montreal animators are given a quick look by Connie Tadros and we close with John Straiton, interviewed by Barry and Greg Thomson. He, unlike the others mentioned in this issue, works in advertising and animates for his pleasure. Would that all the filmmakers in Canada made a steady living and could work at filming, worry free, for the love of it.



Canadian surrealism in **Thanksgiving** by Ken Wallace. Something akin to André Breton's "shipwreck of the most beautiful reason" infuses this about-face by a turkey that, in Wallace's words, was "pretty raunchy by the third day."

canadian animation

from annecy to ottawa

by Ian Birnie

All film festivals have Olympic overtones – they survive on a blend of nationalism and competition, but the final impact is the result of two variable factors: “product” and locale. In the case of the annual animation festival, the “product” is that severely disciplined and unfashionably uncommercial little strip of film most commonly called the cartoon; and the locale – well, this year, in its first venture outside Europe, it's Ottawa. Spiritually, that's about as far from sophisticated Cannes as is Annecy, which snuggling in the French Alps with a propriety that positively eschews hoopla, was the birthplace of a festival that has survived 15 years and is today the leading showcase for international animators. Alternating almost entirely between France and Zagreb since its inception, the festival is regularly attended by the major European animators and critics, with full representation from Japan, North America, and the Soviet-bloc countries.

For its North American debut, Ottawa is the perfect festival town. Home of the National Film Theatre and the Canadian Film Institute, small, scenic and centralized, it will house the screenings and host the delegates in the National Arts Centre, which boasts some of the finest, if least frequently used, projection facilities in Canada. All the major festival activities – in- and out-of-competition screenings, retrospectives, symposiums, press conferences – will take place under one roof, while accommodation for up to 800 has been reserved within walking distance. With almost constant screenings every afternoon and evening, a focused environment of this sort is essential to the intensity of response and the emergence of community feeling that has marked past gatherings. Unreliable distribution facilities (only a handful of the non-North American entries will be seen again in this country), the isolation of many of the animators working in a minority art form (often without big-studio associations) and the dedication of animation buffs, have forged a community that values the European festivals as rallying points for the survival, criticism and proliferation of its art.

Canada has been a regular and highly visible member of that community. At last year's Annecy Festival, the accepted Canadian submissions numbered 16 films (trailing only the US and France). Not surprisingly, 10 of them were from the National Film Board. This domination of the field by the NFB has its advantages – quality “finished” work, regular employment for animators, ongoing international identification with the art – but it is a mistake to assume that animation in Canada is limited to the NFB. Ironically, it was an independent film, shot in three days in the kitchen of a Vancouver painter/sculptor, that became the controversial film at Annecy last year.

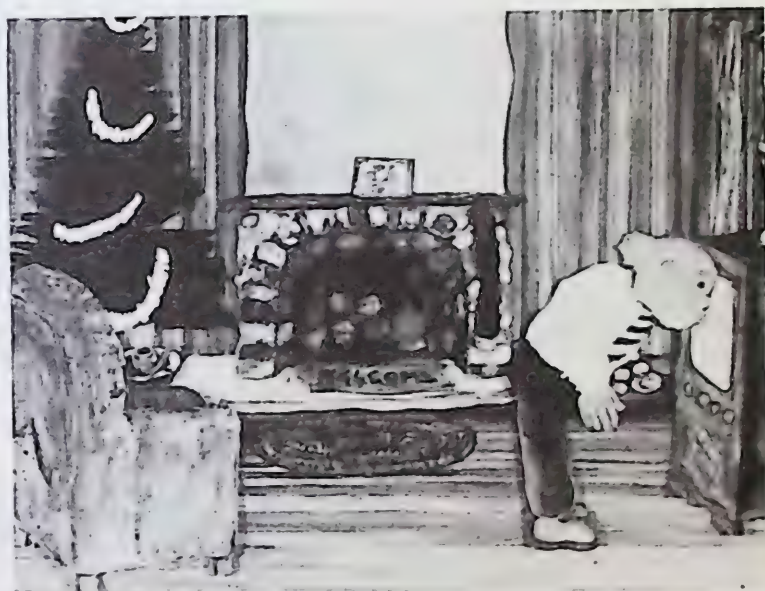
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Annecy audiences aren't very tolerant. With the characteristic and myopic anarchism of French students, they hooted and ridiculed the childish or sentimental; squadrons of paper airplanes shot forth from the balconies if the film moved too slowly; shouting matches ensued among the aggravated. Gene Deitch, the American animator, charged that they “only respect what's grotesque” and in at least one instance he was right on: Ken Wallace's **Thanksgiving** brought down the house.

Wallace's object-animation of a turkey which escapes from the pan, crawls across the floor and down the steps toward an abrupt demise by hatchet is a one-joke piece of guignol that transcends its subject. Despite a plethora of

“surreal” animation, occupying the spectrum from East European paranoia to finely etched variations on Magritte, **Thanksgiving** was the only film that sat honourably in the tradition of surrealism. Utterly irreverent, it owes much of its impact to its straight-faced incongruity; in particular, its heavy breathing sound and the wax-museum eyes which, lodged either side of the Pope's nose (Wallace bored holes in the bone), reverse the turkey's physiognomy in the most alarming way. Wallace is presently working on a more ambitious project, involving an elaborate Birdman structure, and it will be interesting to see if his allegiance to animation develops beyond this grisly hors d'oeuvre.

M. Pointu, the NFB's offering of hallucinatory objects, takes as its starting point the possible combinations and permutations of a violinist, his instrument, his green bowler hat and his shoe. Enlarging and shrinking in a black vortex, this uncontrolled and uncontrollable universe is rich in startling juxtapositions – at one point, Pointu's disembodied head flies by; at another, his body is an enlarged self-playing violin – but the film fails in any real appreciation of the absurd or the horrific or the malevolent. The ambivalence toward this world of senseless objects is exemplified by Pointu himself – too benign, too self-conscious in appearance for a film that never assumes normality as a point of reference.



Cut-out animation from the NFB: **Père Noël! Père Noël!** by Pierre Hébert

M. Pointu was shown out-of-competition, and the Canadians present were dutifully outraged. It was head and shoulders above any number of in-competition films – but what the hell? Half the sport of festivals is spotting the gold among the dross. Certainly that feeling emerged from the special program of Quebec animation: frequently crudely conceived and animated, it was nonetheless energetic, full of visual/aural puns, and rousing chansons soundtracks. Several films stood out: **Je suis moi** by Quebec Love, an allegory of Quebec cinema's domination by foreign interests, and one of the few films at the festival with an overtly political content; **Truck**, in which a toothless goof sings with some feeling about his Big Mac while live-action footage of red and yellow trucks rolls past; **Père Noël! Père Noël!**, Pierre Hébert's haunting tale of a Christmas eve that brings a shoplifting Santa and his lonely, rural brother together over a case of Labatt's 50; here again, live-action elements expressively co-exist with the animation – the arrival of Santa by helicopter in Montreal and the shots of workers at the train station on Christmas Day carry a grainy realism that infuse Hébert's solitary cut-outs with a depth of feeling rare in any animation.

Ian Birnie is education officer in charge of media programs at the Art Gallery of Ontario. During the winter of 1975-76 he organized and exhibited a major animation series at the Art Gallery Theatre which included over 200 films, both an international selection and a remarkable Hollywood retrospective.



Sand animation from the NFB: *Le mariage du hibou* by Caroline Leaf

Both *Père Noël* and *Le mariage du hibou* (NFB) – Caroline Leaf's exquisite black-on-white, white-on-black animation in sand of an Eskimo legend that combines the flat plane of Eskimo art with a soundtrack comprised of hunting cries and the eerie rush of beating wings – gave the international audience a greater sense of Canadian identity than the highlighted festival opener *Who Are We?* Written by Don Arioli, whose *Hot Stuff* is one of the best cartoons ever produced by the NFB, this parody of the search for Canadian identity is tired, cliché-ridden, and debilitating. Starting with a gathering of the planets on the occasion of a show on Earth, known informally as Irma, natch, the film moves on to such favourites as beavers, the maple leaf, and mounties. Even some rather droll moments in the revue – e.g., *Swan Rink*, *Snow White and the Group of Seven*, largely due to animator Zlatko Grgic's fine eye for movement – can't compensate for lyrics like:

Who are we, who are we?
Who really gives a damn?
You are you, and he is he
And that is who we am.

Who Are We? could have been a golden opportunity for some sharp satire, but instead suffers from an NFB trait that recently claimed the usually austere Lotte Reiniger as victim: overproduction. Add to this a script that grafts prefabricated situations onto national traits that no one takes seriously anyway, and one has come a long way from John Grierson's earnest dictum for the NFB: "to bring Canada alive to itself; and the rest of the world to its excellences". Let's hope France doesn't open Ottawa 76 with an equally heavy hand.

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What can we expect from an animation festival in Canada? Will it differ from the European festivals?

In one important way it will. The advisory board has decided that no preselection jury will exist; the judging jury will set its own criteria regarding which films will be judged in-competition and which out. In other words, the one jury will see *all* the films (nearly 300 entries are anticipated), not just those preselected by another jury. This measure should, at any rate, remove one bone of contention which inevitably emerges with the tedious task of competitive judgments.

In other respects, Ottawa 76, under the administration and direction of Frederik Manter and Wayne Clarkson of the CFI, has acted fast and against a shortage of time to

ensure all the components of the classic festival. A logo and opening trailer has been designed by Radio Canada. Four retrospective programs have been organized in addition to the competitive screenings: an Oskar Fischinger Retrospective, which will include several films never before publicly screened, and will be attended by Fischinger's widow; a retrospective of films by the Quebecois animator and painter, Raoul Barré, who died in Montreal in 1932 after 25 years of work in New York City (six of them at his own studio); a Retrospective of Cut-out Animation which will focus on that technique in a dozen films dating from 1906 to the present; a retrospective of National Film Board animation since the department's inception in 1941. Midnight screenings of feature-length animation and a possible program of stereoscopic – 3D! – animation should top off a festival which the recent CFI communique, eschewing modesty, hails as "one of the best ever".

But the real opportunity of the festival lies not only in the retrospectives, nor even the competitions; it rests more generally with the chance for large numbers of North American animators to meet and evaluate their peers, to share in the same community that has flourished in Europe. For example, an animation workshop, organized by animator Co Hoedeman (co-sponsored by the NFB and ASIFA Canada – our Montreal-based branch of this international society of animators) will be held concurrently at the University of Ottawa. Aimed at students who, without fee, are provided with 16 mm, super-8, and video equipment, the workshop represents a first step toward broadening the scope of festival week, and a welcome de-emphasis of the more passive film-viewing role.

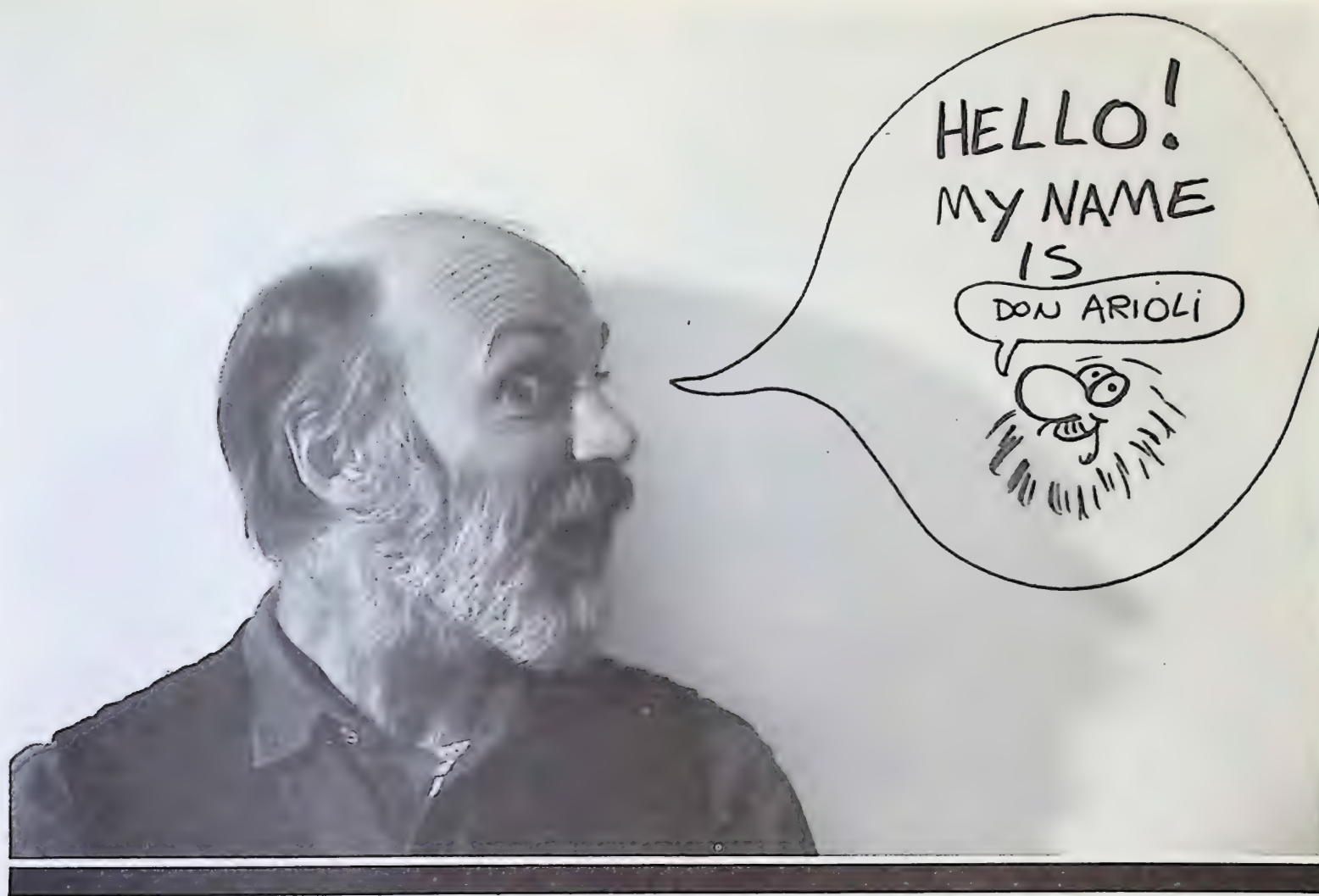
The festival should further represent a point of focus for the problems of subsidy and distribution, particularly as they affect independent animators. The Art Gallery of Ontario recently surveyed a dozen Canadian independents about existing and alternative means of financing, distributing, and viewing animation. John Straiton's ironic reply echoed general sentiments: "What financing, distribution, viewing?" Still, many responses focused on tying animated shorts to features in commercial cinemas, distribution of independent work through the existing outlets of the NFB, increased programming of films by the CBC, and expansion of library/museum collections.

The answers reveal a far-from-surprising ambivalence: an aggressive demand for commercial outlets and marketplace status combined with a defensive reiteration of government subsidy. Toronto animator John Leach put it bluntly: "It's a supply and demand situation. When animation can compete with Jack Nicholson and Liz Taylor at the box office, it'll be a whole new ball game." Well, yes and no. The fact remains: an aware response from "outside" – from commercial cinema and television – can make an essential contribution to animators. The enlarged resources can both stabilize the artist and liberate the art. An animation community, the forging of a regular North American festival is a desirable thing; but an animation ghetto is not.

• • •

All festivals produce metaphors; they flutter afterward from the journalistic pen like butterflies. Last year at Annecy, it was toilets, birds, and *Le pas* – the grand prize winner which articulated the slicing away of one cube into paper-thin leaves which fell to build up another absolutely identical cube – classical, neutral, cold, irrelevant; a technique in search of a subject.

Few festivals produce issues. Annecy sidestepped the brutal misogyny that surfaced in at least seven films, the inherent racism of Ralph Bakshi's *Coonskin*, and the dubious political allegories of several children's films. If Ottawa has a chance to be different, it lies in taking a tougher look at animation: at its mythical substructure, at its modernist tendencies, at its unlimited potential. □



the cheshire bureaucrat

by Ronald H. Blumer

If filmmakers as a breed are a little wacky, people involved in animation form a loony subgroup of their own. One minute's screen time, 720 drawings. A normal person can hardly conceive of the work it takes to produce one short gag — a 10-minute film can be a year's work. Don Arioli is quick to point out that he does not consider himself an animator. "I am interested in telling stories with my films. When I was animating my own films I used all sorts of shortcuts to get to the point. I have no patience with the animation; I want to make one movie a week, not one movie a year!"

Ronald H. Blumer is currently an instructor in cinema at Vanier College in Montreal. Prior to this he taught at Marianopolis College and was a teaching assistant at McGill University and Boston University. Concurrent with teaching, he has also been working on a series of films on aging.

Like many of those involved in animation, Arioli communicates with few words in a language of gestures and sound effects. He looks and acts like his cartoon characters. Wolf Koenig, former head of English animation at the NFB, hired Arioli 10 years ago as resident genius. From the beginning, it was obvious that his talents lay not in the process of animation, the meticulous drawing of picture after picture which brings the characters alive — Arioli is a storyboarder, one of the rare idea men. In the United States, he could be counting his millions writing one-line gags for MASH or planning out the next Alka-Seltzer ad. His job is to be funny. "The idea of sitting down and trying to be funny is pure tragedy; it can drive you crazy, but when you get it, it's a tremendous sensation. I'm sitting in a restaurant doodling, putting various ideas and pictures together, and then I hit on it. When I kill myself laughing, sitting there alone, I know it must be funny."



One member of the loony subgroup



Don Arioli

The House That Jack Built was nominated for an Oscar, **Hot Stuff** won an Etrog, and his extremely funny films on smoking, inflation and taxes show that he is not laughing by himself. And this is the exceptional thing about Arioli: he is not only very funny, but funny within the context of the boring old National Film Board – the civil service. “People come up to me and say, ‘Gee, you don’t look like a civil servant.’ (It’s like, ‘You don’t look Jewish.’) I enjoy the challenge of impossible tasks – trying to make fire prevention funny. I like the idea of someone coming up to me and saying, ‘Make a film on coffee cups; it’s got to be short, witty, bilingual and Canadian.’ Grierson’s idea was to get the artists and the bureaucrats together – throw them in the same room and see what happens. I like the process of trying to work out ideas with a group of people who have something they want to say. Coming from totally different backgrounds, communications with Ottawa can be frustrating, but when it works it’s very exciting.”

Arioli has been involved in an enormous variety of projects both in and out of the Board. His speciality, the humor/message package, is of particular interest to educators and he has frequently worked for *Sesame Street*. Arioli films have a distinctive style and humor. He is best with one-liners such as the quick succession of visual and verbal jokes in **Propaganda Message** where he nimbly dances on Canada’s collective sore spots. His power is in the throw-away, the little character popping his head up at the side of the screen and distracting from the action. His stars are invariably little men with beards and short, fat, booby women and again their humor is in the asides, the mutters off to the corner of the screen, the nagging and the relevant irrelevancies. His longer films tend to be his weakest. Like a magician or a stand-up comic, Arioli’s power is in the speed of delivery. He describes himself as a 10-minute-maximum man and his favorite exercise is the one-minute commercial.

Don Arioli is a very young 40-year-old. Before coming to Canada in 1962, he plied a variety of trades, ranging from disc jockey to pouring asphalt driveways to a corporal in the United States Marines. His dream was always cartoons and comics and he took a course in commercial art. “I had half a year’s training in figure drawing. They were training us to be advertising artists, but I couldn’t figure out one end of an airbrush from another. Everything technical threw me; I couldn’t mix colors, I didn’t letter neat, I didn’t understand perspective – I just knew I liked drawing. Very

soon my teachers convinced me I was incompetent so I quit art and joined the Marines.”

In Toronto, he became involved with Jim McKay who runs Film Design, a small creative animation studio. Working virtually alone, he started producing short little animated skits for a CBC kids’ program, *Butternut Square*. “I had never done animation before that. We were doing one story a week, three minutes of animation with a budget of \$100 for each item. (Animation normally costs \$10,000 per minute.) Jim had a rather primitive setup, a 16 mm camera on a greased broomstick that moved up and down and not much else. Every Friday we had to have one of these things ready, and I was going nuts trying to meet this impossible deadline. But I wanted to do it; I had all these crazy stories I’d been



The cat in **Hot Stuff**



Shooting animation at MS Services

According to Manolo Corvera, who runs MS Art Services in Toronto, there are eight to 15 animators working full time in television commercials and the like in Canada, at around \$500 a week.

In Toronto, there is little in the way of animated industrial films of the kind which keep animators busy for extended periods in, say, London or Los Angeles. In Canada that area is pre-empted by the National Film Board.

Extended animation projects such as Al Guest's *Rocket Robin Hood* have not occurred for many years.

The work available to Toronto production houses through the Ontario Educational Communications Authority offers few returns because of high costs in the former and low budgets in the latter.

And then there's the Quebec law banning animation in commercials directed at children under 13, which has cut out animation in this category across the country.

The five representative studios discussed below show a range of the possible responses to the self-evident challenge of surviving in animation in Toronto.

MS Art Services Ltd, 410 Adelaide West, was started in the late '60s by

*Jaan Pill is a graduate in psychology from Simon Fraser University where he also edited the student newspaper and worked as a summer student at the Vancouver National Film Board production office. He is currently working on a film project, **Holes and Wholes**, an animated film based on figure-ground transformations in the class of optical illusions known as "ambiguous figures."*

Manolo Corvera as an art house in conjunction with its parent company Film Opticals of Canada, an optical house.

The studio does animation, audio-visual productions, and stages large industrial shows with singers and dancers. Its animation facilities include two 35 mm Mitchell cameras for "stop-action" animation technique (using three-dimensional objects instead of art work for animation).

Corvera began as an illustrator for the Disney organization in Spain, later worked for Crawley Films, Ottawa, then went to Al Guest Animation in Toronto. When the latter company folded, Corvera started MS Art.

According to Corvera, his staff of 20 includes "three or four people doing animation, but not on a regular basis. We've never developed more," he explains, "because there's not much animation going on in Canada."

Cinera Production Ltd, 439 Wellington West, was started in the late '60s by Vladimir Goetzelman. It does commercials "for just about every major advertiser in the country." Also educational work, and work for the United States.

Goetzelman, trained in art schools in Europe and Canada, is experienced in film graphics, film design, animation and special effects. He had worked, along with Corvera, for Al Guest Animation and started Cinera after the latter folded.

He speaks of Cinera's consistent history: "I guess we are, in terms of staff and involvement, probably the last large continuous production house in Canada," he explains.

Cinera recently completed two series of animated films on American history for the U.S. Bicentennial. The first deals with the American Revolution, the second with the next 100 years after it. There are 104 4½-minute films in each series. Over 100 American stations have signed up for the series, as part of a syndicated program.

"We've found ourselves in the position," says Goetzelman, "where we know that if we don't get at least half of our business out of the United States, sooner or later we're going to be in financial trouble."

Videoart Production Ltd, 18 Temperance St., was started in 1959 by graphic designer Jack Kuper and commercial producer Bill Campbell, as a side venture to their work at CBC. In 1960 they sold it to graphics designer Bob Kane, who now has a full staff of six or seven, and one to eight freelancers.

Half the company's work is animation, half slide production. The animation include public service spots, and also educational films for OECA (Ontario Educational Communications Authority, Channel 19).

"We've found OECA very helpful," says Kane. "We probably wouldn't in the animation business if it weren't for OECA."

"Our top animator here," he adds, "would not make the money that the top animator at Cinera would make, because he hasn't the experience." (Cinera does very little work for OECA these days, because of the latter's tight budgets.)

Certified Canadian Content Productions, 22 Geneva Street, was recently formed by freelancers Dennis Pike and Ivan Goricanec in connection with a series of animated inserts for live-action sequences on Haida, Hopi and other Indian legends for *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

The series is being produced in Hollywood, with plans to show it on Canadian television, which is why much of the production work is in Canada — which also explains the company's unique name.

Pike, an art school graduate, worked in England at Halas and Batchelor, Biographic Cartoons and Larkins. In Canada, he first worked in Winnipeg and then at Crawley's in Ottawa — followed by work at Expo, Ontario Place, and at MS Art (on its *Planet of Man* series for OECA).

Film Design Ltd, 4 New Street, was started by Jim McKay in 1955. McKay doesn't do as many commercials as he used to. "I don't say I try not to do them but I don't go out of my



Miguel Corvera and Jim McKay consult while shooting animated film on camera

way to get commercials," he explains. "We do, oh, some now and then but what I like doing best is stuff, I'd say, for children."

Stuff, he adds, "that expresses some sort of idea that has some importance to somebody."

For example, he made a film two years ago for Eastman Kodak in Rochester, N.Y., on how cameras work, for children. It wasn't high-budget, but it was fun to do: "I'd rather do that than sell soup or soap suds."

McKay, a graduate of the Ontario College of Art, began working with Norman McLaren at the Film Board when the animation department was first set up in Ottawa.

Seven years later he and George Dunning formed Graphic Associates in Toronto. It lasted five years, after which Dunning went to London, and McKay formed Film Design.

At Film Design, he decided to keep the company small. "The bigger you get, the more you start to take work you don't want to do. And after a while you're used to taking, you know, horrible work. And then you're in it for the money and that's it. Oh, I don't pretend to be any angel, or anything. I just decided, I suppose, to maintain a low profile."



Artwork for a *Sesame Street* spot by Ken Stephenson: Videoart Productions

Where Can You Sell and How?

"In Canada the government is obliged to have all its work done by the Film Board, and if you do get a government film to do you can be pretty damn sure that the Film Board is not interested in it. They put it out to tender and you know full well that it's a bitch."

Dennis Pike

"It's very hard for the Canadian industry to expand, because they (the NFB) do all the government jobs, which is very unfair. They don't put out too many tenders, and the tenders they put out... aren't good ones."

Manolo Corvera

One result of the scarcity of animated industrial films in Toronto, according to Pike, is the almost exclusive concentration on TV commercials (with bits and pieces for OECA during down times), which means that most animation houses in town would find it hard to take on a project like the Indian Legend series for Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Another result is that, unlike in, say, London, where animators have extended periods to work on industrial films, senior Toronto animators have little time, in the midst of short, intensive productions, to train assistants. The Sheridan College animation program fulfills this need only partially, although the consensus among professionals is that the quality of the program is improving. How to absorb the graduates into the industry is an-

other problem. Many in the industry suggest they try elsewhere, such as the United States.

OECA

"With the overhead that we have, the kind of people that we have doing the work, we can't very often sell animation at very low prices, try as we might."

Mike Smith (MS Art)

On doing work for OECA: "Anybody that has to live on that work sooner or later is going to go broke."

Vladimir Goetzelman

Goetzelman says he guesses the average OECA budget is \$600 to \$700 a minute. "It's just sweatshop work. It's not leading anywhere."

One of Cinera's first projects as a company was a low-budget series for OECA on mathematics, which was well received. "Now, I don't think we could even touch their work," says Goetzelman. "We're always at least 500 bucks over budget whenever we quote."

He contrasts the OECA budget to work Cinera has done for the Children's Television Workshop in the U.S. (*Sesame Street*, *Electric Company*). The budgets are \$4,000 a minute. "They're not fat, but one can work within those budgets."

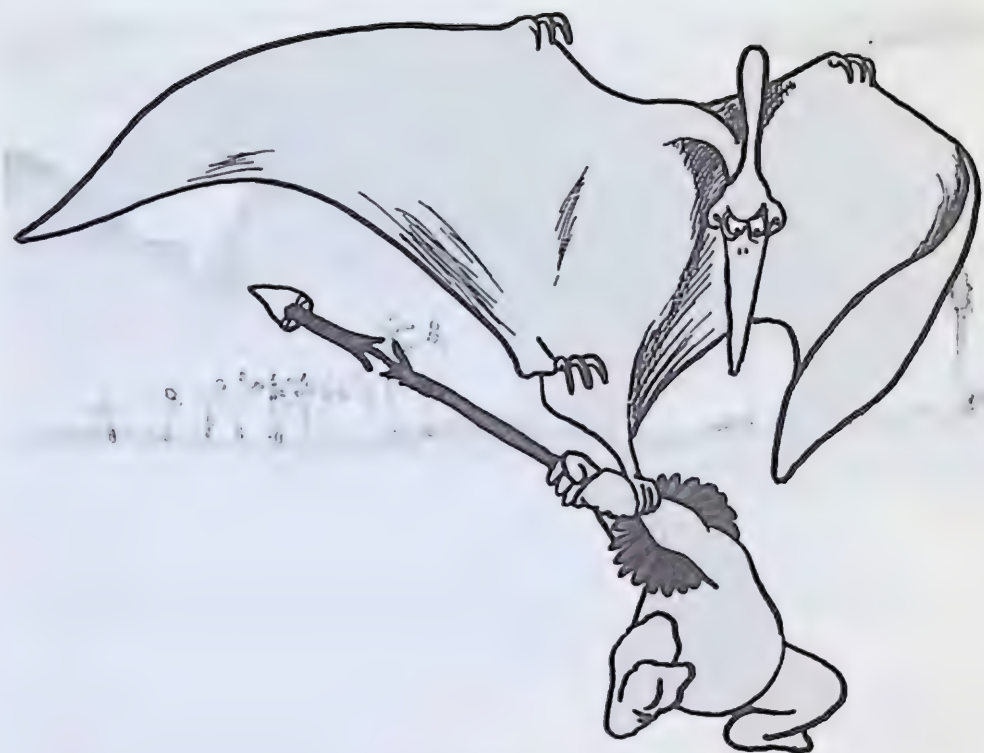
Maggie Stratton, assistant to the director of school programs at OECA, has a different estimate on average costs from Goetzelman's. "It's always very expensive. It can vary anywhere from \$1500 to \$4000 a minute."

"In general, the amount of animation that we've used," she adds, "is extremely limited, because we simply cannot afford to pay those prices. And it's kind of a vicious circle. We can't afford to pay the price and the animation house cannot afford to bring the price down, because it has to survive."

Children of Quebec

Around 1974, the effects of a Quebec law banning animation in commercials aimed at children under 13 devastated commercial animation in Toronto.

The Quebec law made advertisers across Canada turn to live-action rather than make two commercials, one for Quebec, one for elsewhere, in commercials directed at children.



Artwork for a 30-second Ministry of Culture and Recreation spot by Ken Stephenson: Video-art Productions

"It killed that part of the business," explains Vladimir Goetzelman, "which was always a reliable source of income to the industry."

Involved were such accounts as children's breakfast foods, chocolate bars, and other aggressively advertised processed foods. Also, the ban applied to any commercial appearing in a children's time slot — no animation was allowed.

"In general," says Goetzelman, "it kind of made the whole business less healthy. It's not healthy to begin with, and that just kind of pulled the rug out from under it."

He adds, however, that Cinera had been doing more adult commercials anyway. "It didn't affect us that much."

MS Art lost "something like eight or ten commercials" a year with the new law — including Kelloggs' Tony the Tiger, and its Corn Flakes ad with Yogi. Manolo Corvera notes, however, that Kelloggs is testing the ruling: recently they've tried using puppets.

In Quebec, meanwhile, legislation has been introduced which, if passed, would bar all advertising directed at children under 13.

"Every couple of years somebody goes broke. That doesn't reflect on the quality of the company. It reflects on the total state of the art in Canada."

Vladimir Goetzelman

NORM DREW PRODUCTIONS



Born in Kenora Ontario, Mr. Drew is a graduate of both the fine and applied arts courses at the University of Alberta. Drew began his art and film career in 1963, when he joined Crawley Films in Ottawa to work on the NBC feature cartoon "Return to Oz". He freelanced for a large Toronto daily as illustrator on the internationally syndicated feature "The Giants", from 1964 until 1967 when he joined T.V.C. in London England, where he worked on "The Beatles' Yellow Submarine". Other well known features to his credit include "The Jackson Five" (ABC TV); "The Osmond Brothers" (ABC TV); cartoon series and animated films for "The Electric Company", New York. Drew returned to Canada in 1972, where he was creative director of a Toronto animation studio. In 1973 he came to Vancouver to help direct "Wait 'til Your Father Gets Home" (CBS TV), an animated series produced at Canwest Film Productions. He opened his own studio—Norm Drew Productions, in 1974 and since then has done films for "Sesame Street", TV commercials, the animated titles for "The Irish Rovers" TV variety show and is currently producing the series "Chika's Magic Sketch Book" which appears on the CBC TV national network.



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TIDBITS ABOUT ANIMATORS

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The story begins with the "French Fiasco." OECA - Ontario Educational Communication Authority - was starting a big-budget French-language series, asked quotes from local production houses. Didn't like prices, went to Los Angeles. Local animators found out, started agitating.

OECA, trying to do right thing, decided from now on it'll take bids on absolutely everything - and what they decided to tender at that point was a contract already awarded verbally to a freelancer - Willy Ashworth - who had just finished several weeks' preparation for a new "Readalong" series, which he'd also worked on last year.

At June 1 meeting with OECA, other production houses find out Willy had a handshake agreement already, and refuse to bid. Willy, along with Patsy Crudden (who also worked on the project last year), gets the job.

And that's also how the Canadian Animation Producers Association (tentative title) had its start. It consists of Toronto animation producers, with Montreal and Ottawa representatives so far, and aims to be Canada-wide.

"I've only been in the industry five years now," Willy says, "and I've never known anything quite like it. It was encouraging. I think it's good for the industry. I think we can help each other."

Encouraged by the result of sitting down together and dealing with OECA as a united group, the producers are now looking to other areas.

"We generally are overlooked in all negotiations between guild and craft people and other professional organizations," as **Al Guest** of Rainbow Productions explains. "Even the Council of Canadian Filmmakers, in their dealings with the federal and provincial governments, forget about the animators. Because they consider us to be filmmakers like them - which to some extent is true, but we have special problems, which they don't know because they're not in our business."

Got some interesting comments from **Scott Didlake** at the Ontario College of Art about the super-8 festival in Toronto in April. The best of the animation is now on videotape, for anyone who wants to see it. Some of the best was done by 12-year-olds (there were no age categories). He also mentioned **Eugene Federenko**, who taught animation to children during the recent animation festival at the Art Gallery of Ontario.

While on the topic - **Peter Jones** of the Film Board office in Vancouver mentions an NFB film made there with children as animators - with NFB animators "hovering around and being helpful but not interfering with the creative process."



Dennis Pike
drawing Jaan Pill

The Cape Dorset project out of the same office, with workshops set up for young Eskimo filmmakers, also comes to mind. Really excellent work - a purity of vision, a clarity. One of the shorts won a prize at Zagreb in 1974.

With his Indian legend animation series for a producer in L.A. just about wrapped up, Toronto freelancer **Dennis Pike** is working on two live-action film projects. One involves Canadian history. With the American bicentennial celebrations comes a heavy media onslaught promoting the popular American version of the history of the North American continent:

"If we're not careful we're going to find the history of the period 200 years ago crystallize into the mold that it's been forced into this year.

"Quebec as we see it today is a product of the American war for independence. All the problems that are built into Quebec are there as a direct result of the war and the Loyalist migration northward."

Also in the works is a live-action Pike film about Eskimo and Inuit land claims in northern Canada.

Interesting to talk to freelancer Pike about the Film Board. Norman McLaren, he comments, is a national

monument. That's good, he says. On the other hand, work in industry has been the same or almost the same as what he's done, but one never gets the two years to polish it: "In fact they're just ordinary people with a lot of time and a lot of money to polish the hell out of stuff. And of course you haven't got that commercially." (You'd accept second or third rough and use it. At Board you'd keep on refining till happy.)

That's where their reputation is, says Pike: the polish. Great people. "But it's like the protection you get from being in a monastery.

"After a while the big wheels who develop through the Film Board hierarchy appear to the rest of the world almost as cardinals. They've all got red robes."

Seems the February 1976 issue of **Millimeter** really has become a collector's item ...**Cine Books** reports that its original stock sold out completely. They reordered and that's all sold out too. "Anything on animation goes very quickly."

Another treat is the article on **Oskar Fischinger** by William Moritz in **Film Culture**, Nos. 58-60, 1974. Fischinger, whose free-flowing synchrony of music and visual imagery in a short set to Brahms' Hungarian Dance No. 5 had a significant influence on the development of Norman McLaren as an animator, was fascinated with natural medicine, experimented with diets, moon cycles, magnetic earth currents. His work on "synthetic sound" and "sounding images" in the '30s was a forerunner of what is now called concrete and electronic music. Few understood what he was getting at till he spoke about his concepts to **Edgar Varese** and **John Cage** in the '40s, and they were able to exploit them in their work. (And John Cage, you remember, said that "Everything we do is music. Everywhere is the best seat.")

And now a word from **Jim McKay** of Film Design. Tell me, Jim, what do you think about the way animation houses pop up and disappear over the years?

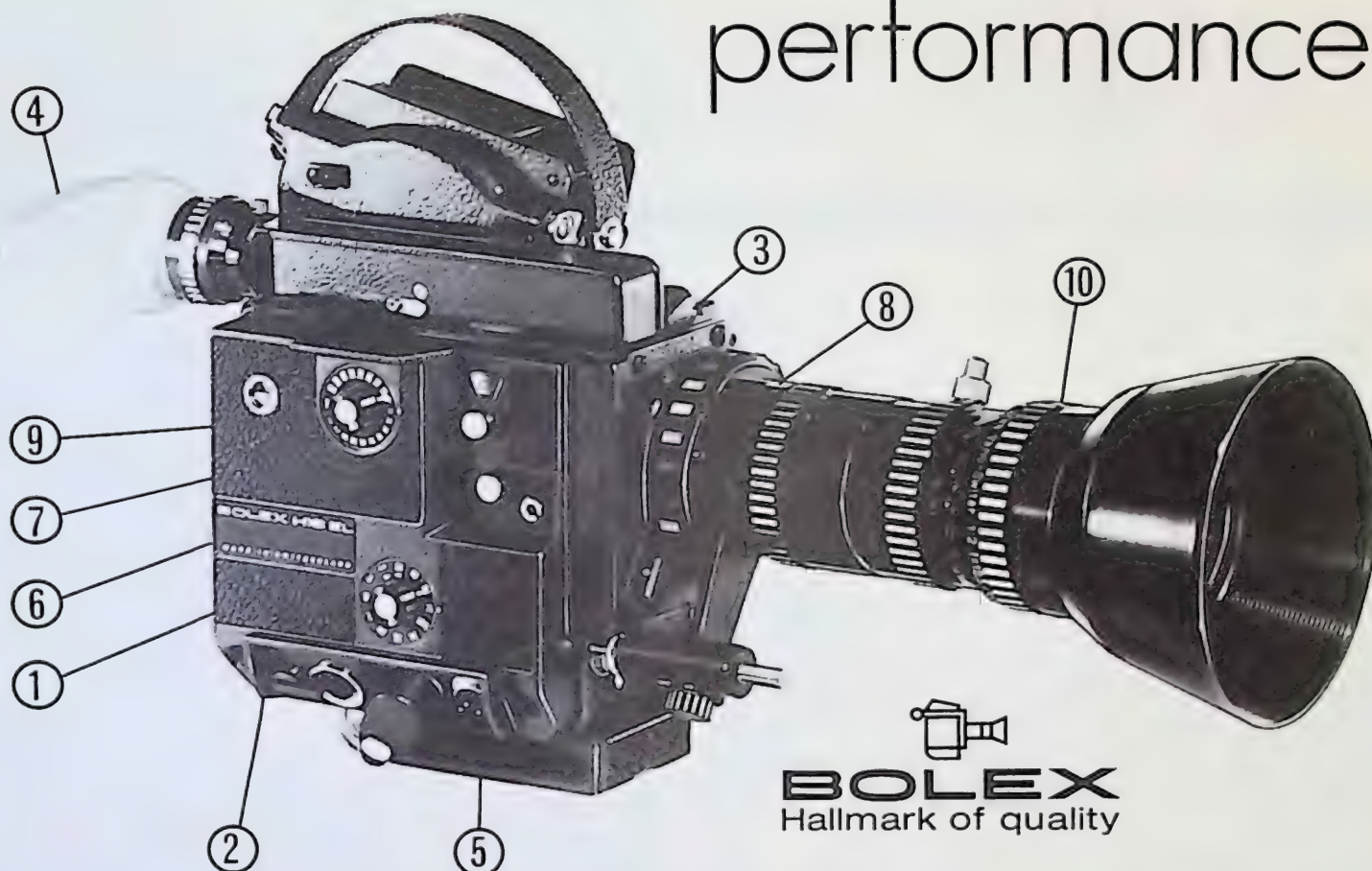
"Well, my impression is that animators are like migrant fruit pickers. They go where the action is.

"I was always amazed when I would go to New York and meet people, and find out where they worked and for what studios they worked, and then I'd go back a year or two later to find out half the studios didn't exist anymore. But the people were still there, working under different names and in different combinations. It all sounds like animation is insecure - but then I'm suspicious of security as an end.

"I guess I like the challenge. To be able to adapt and change to a situation is what makes life interesting."

Jaan Pill

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August 1976/31

visiting guest and meeting nemo

by Katherine Gilday

By 1967 Al Guest was a very busy man. The animation studio he had developed in Toronto was at its peak – the third-largest in the world, with a staff of 150 and a half-hour film to be turned out per week. “We were the well-spring,” Guest says. “The most active, aggressive animation company around.” Then a mammoth business venture fell through – and the whole thing came tumbling down. The Guest Group, five companies in all, split up and its creative personnel scattered in all directions. Guest left for Europe vowing never to return to this country and never again, at all cost, to become involved in animation. A year and a half later he was back – in Canada and in animation. This spring he has just sold the first fully Canadian animated series ever produced to the English and French networks of the CBC.

Al Guest has survived for a remarkable 25 years in the animation business in Canada, 20 years as an independent producer – though he ruefully admits to being unsure whether he’s “survived” or been endowed with several lives. We are sitting in a pleasantly dishevelled room, home of his most recent incarnation, Rainbow Animation Ltd. The company is two years old and has only recently moved into new quarters at 45 Charles St. E., cheek-by-jowl with several other small film companies such as Spence-Thomas Productions. Jean Mathieson, Guest’s partner and long-time associate, sits working at a light-table as we talk, periodically injecting her pungent turns of phrase into the conversation.

“I was working just to meet the payroll every week,” Guest recalls of former days. Now he has very definite ideas about how to keep an independent production house alive and healthy. Rainbow maintains only a small core of permanent staff, hiring freelancers for specific projects when the need arises. “We’ve tried to assemble our own repertory group here... for example, our cameraman also does inking, painting, xeroxing.” A conscious attempt has been made to avoid “the usual caste system of animation studios where the animators are the Brahmins and the painters, the Untouchables”. Al believes the lowest-paid labors requiring the least training are as significant as the more specialized functions, in terms of what finally appears on the screen.

Both partners place special emphasis on the self-sufficiency of their operation. “We don’t have the economic necessity to keep manufacturing. We don’t have a big machine to feed,” Al says. He believes that many Canadian production companies still labor under the delusive assumption that they must hang on to a large permanent staff. “If all our contracts died tomorrow, we’d be able to take time out to work up a pilot and try to sell it. Jean and I could do the whole thing ourselves – write it, shoot it, even do the voices if we had to.”

How the partnership itself functions begins to come clear, as well. Al sees himself as an artist; but, as he says, “I’m of an entrepreneurial nature and that’s the side of me that has always asserted itself.” His satisfaction derives from helping to create and realize a project as an entity and he tends to focus his energies on pre- and post-production. Jean is usually more actively involved in the production stage itself: “She has to watch it move.”

The partnership and the approach seem to be paying off, though past experience certainly hasn’t hurt (productions equivalent in length to more than 50 feature films, Guest claims). The breakthrough came in 1975 with *Ukalik*, a half-hour animated fantasy based on Eskimo art and their first true programming venture. It sold in fourteen countries. Most important of all, Rainbow owns the film.

Their latest project and the one they are most interested in discussing is a series of five-minute animated films for children on oceanography, entitled *Captain Nemo*. It is startling to discover that this is the first animated series ever to be created, financed and produced in Canada. Guest explains that implementation of CRTC Canadian content regulations is such, in the field of animation, as to permit American producers a huge and unfair advantage since it does not call for authentic Canadian production. A film that passes as Canadian content may, for example, be written, designed and financed in the States, with only the drawing and shooting done here. Guest feels strongly that the Canadian content label should be reserved for films 100% produced in Canada, with a significant number of the negatives (from which the major profits are made) owned in this country.

It is the reasoning of a pragmatic man of business, not a fervent nationalist. What he wants is to be permitted to deal with the Americans on an equal basis with access to their markets. He has done much of his work for Americans over the years and is open in his admiration of them, particularly for those entrepreneurial qualities whose lack in the Canadian personality is an old and well-worn song.

Katherine Gilday is working on her PhD on twentieth century poetry at the University of Toronto. She was production assistant on the Durrell series, The Stationary Ark, and is currently trying to finish a short film about a window.



The fearless Captain Nemo and his ship

Captain Nemo, then, was conceived as very much a commercial product. "What we saw Saturday mornings was so awful...", Al says. "It had no substance that we could determine and it didn't even look that good. We thought we could do better." Their experience with a children's TV workshop in New York which was utilizing super-hero comic characters for educational purposes helped to mold the series concept. Capt. Nemo is a rock-jawed muscleman, a sort of ecological hero who hands out tidbits of scientifically accurate information about ocean life (a panel of five international oceanographers checks the script) within an action/adventure format.

I ask Al whether his products reflect anything distinctively Canadian in our culture. He replies somewhat pessimistically that we're all pretty much Americanized anyway. The issue, however, turns out not to be that simple for him. It seems that while the CBC has been very enthusiastic about the series and given it all-out support the producers are experiencing some difficulties selling it in the US. Not enough violence to suit American distributors.

Jean grows incensed on the subject of distributors, whom she sees for the most part as parasites, interested only in large profits and in seeing what has worked before repeated *ad nauseam*. "Their objectives have absolutely nothing to do with the public welfare — they have no morals." She

recalls one of the men in Hollywood who turned thumbs down on the series because of its lack of violence: "He came out of an office all pink and gold, like Lana Turner's bedroom — a horrible crummy fat man with a cigar, the whole bit — and *this* is the guy who's going to decide what my kids are going to watch on TV!"

Al and Jean have received a more favorable response from the various station groups in New York, and will peddle it themselves, station by station, if necessary.

I watch the series pilot and am struck by the amalgam of influences, the compromise of styles and attitudes it represents. It *looks* like all the American children's shows — as it is designed to do in order to attract an audience. A booming voice over the titles announces the death-defying adventures to come. But the story itself is a surprise. The nuclear submarine in which Capt. Nemo and his young side-kicks Chris and Robby (girl and boy) are travelling is adopted by a young blue whale as its mother. The action centres on finding the real mother before the baby, in its enthusiastic affection, does fatal damage to the craft. Along the way, pertinent details about the species, including the crucial fact that it is endangered, are supplied by our underwater hero. A shark appears — and so do the big guns of the sub. But instead of blasting the creature, Capt. Nemo tries to lay low in the hope they will not be seen. The message that comes across is this: they are prepared to shoot if they absolutely have to, but they'd rather not have to. The shark is eventually disposed of by the mother whale, not in a violent, blood-and-guts battle, but through the brief single impact of her ponderous bulk. The sub, meanwhile, hurries away.

The episode is apparently typical of the rest of the series in the stance it assumes towards the natural world. Though the pace has been quickened in later programs, the producers have stood fast in their refusal to incorporate unnecessary violence into the series. In addition, many of the worst excesses of Disney-style wildlife depiction have been avoided. The ocean's inhabitants are relatively unanthropomorphized, and the natural situation generally left to resolve itself. Instead of an assertive human presence, the protagonists' activity is purposely kept as unobtrusive as possible, extending only to credible involvement with the ocean world, such as setting a stranded whale free. And even then, as Jean points out, "It doesn't come back and warble thank-you in a Nelson Eddy voice." Such an approach, Al admits, holds something distinctively Canadian about it, something reminiscent of our strong documentary tradition and of our accustomed role as "observers".

The series seems to have won the approval of the ecology-minded Greenpeace Foundation who have taken the pilot back to Ottawa to show to schoolchildren. Rainbow is donating drawings for the organization's fund-raising auction next month.

At the moment 52 programs are planned, with the possibility of a further 13. Three are finished. Animation is an extremely time-consuming business — each five-minute segment takes about seven weeks to pass through the assembly-line talents of 12 people. A wide variety of ocean-related topics will be covered — pollution, archaeology, mining, farming, in addition to the ongoing interest in marine life. The series will be shown on the CBC as part of a children's program, *Peanuts and Popcorn*, Saturdays 10:30 to 12:00, modelled along the lines of an old-fashioned Saturday matinee (cartoon, serial, feature) and starting in October.

Al Guest doesn't see himself in any vanguard as far as the animation medium goes. Although he can talk intelligently about the latitude it offers for handling abstractions or the challenges inherent in animated features, he sees Rainbow geared mainly towards the television market. "We're primarily entertainers," he says, "trying to keep our own principles in mind." □

animation in vancouver

by N'eema Lakin

*
(NOTE) DOGS EYES WHEN OPEN
ARE WHITE

MAGENTA
INSIDE MOUTH



HOLE INSIDE HAT
WHEN OFF THE DOG
BLACK.

Animation has often been regarded with something less than respect and appreciation by both filmmakers and the general public. The capture of cinematographic realism has always easily impressed viewers. Thus, live-action films are often seen as the appropriate medium for artistic expression, the discussion of philosophical issues, and the proper presentation of both personal and political ideologies.

Animation, though a film form, is paradoxically closer to the graphic arts – particularly the popular arts in that, from the beginning, an interchange has existed between cartoons, comics, and the animated film.

However, in recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of animation as a film form. An increasing number of film festivals, articles, and courses are being devoted to both an historical view of animation and animation technique.

N'eema Lakin holds an MA in communication studies from Simon Fraser University, where she also worked as a teaching assistant. Having made some animated films and been active in founding the Burnaby Mountain Film Society, Ms. Lakin is presently working as a freelance writer in Vancouver.

In the traditional view, Canadian animation is centered in Montreal and begins and ends with the National Film Board. This assumption ignores the fact that much of the animation originating in Canada has been produced in commercial ventures, outside the confines of the NFB. Even independent filmmakers and small companies are gearing their production primarily towards the commercial and popular entertainment fields, though perhaps employing less traditional commercial styles to accomplish these aims.

A growing number of animators are also working independently in individual styles on personal films as well as commercial projects, breaking the previously sharply defined boundaries between the amateur and the professional, and between the commercial and the avant-garde.

Vancouver supports a small but active group of animators. Perhaps not more than 12 individuals could be classified as full-time professional animators. Even among this group, several people occasionally take on odd jobs to supplement their incomes.

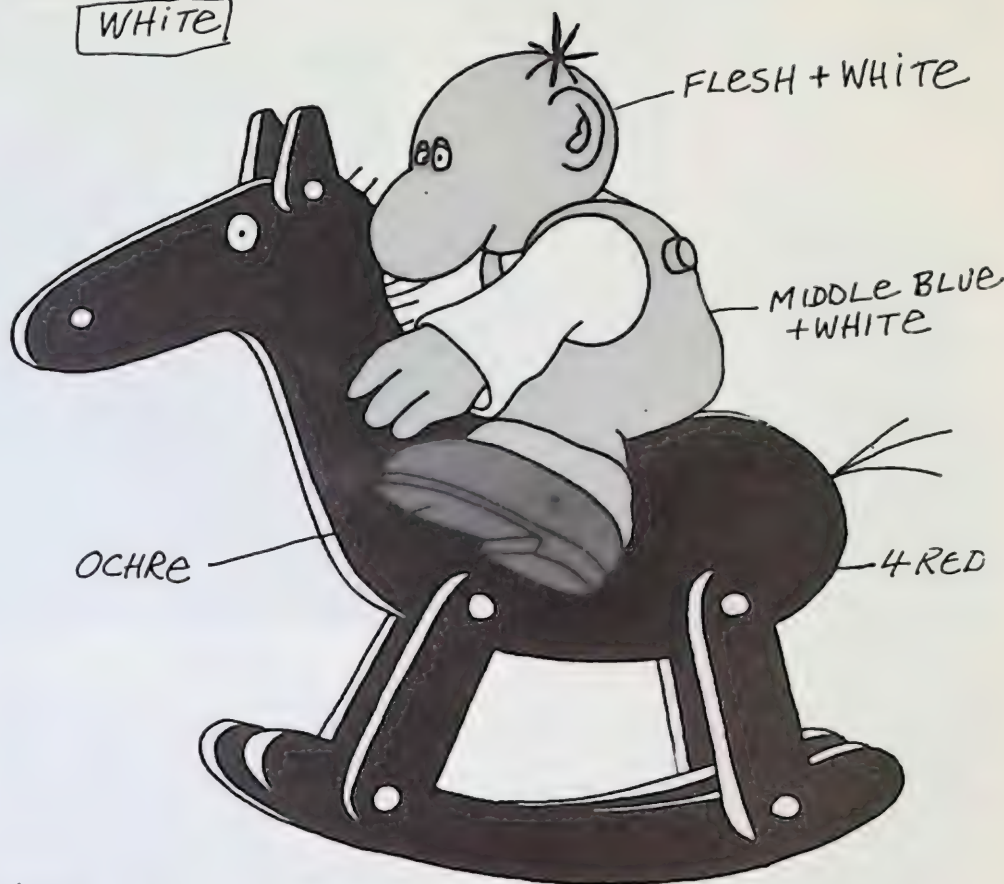
Due in part to the small size of the professional community, animators in Vancouver seem to have formed a rather tightly integrated group. As Don Worobey, head of the NFB's Vancouver animation studio, states, "The majority of animators here, especially those between the ages of 25 and 35, studied at the Vancouver School of Art, and share a similar training in the visual arts and graphic design. We also tend to maintain contact with each other and with film students currently enrolled at VSA."

As such, most animators are familiar with each other's films and often do subcontract work on each other's projects, as well as freelancing for the NFB or larger animation firms.

Canawest Film Productions, the largest commercial animation studio in Vancouver, is a division of KVOS-TV, the CBS network station from Bellingham, Washington. Although only three people, Cathy Madsen, Liz Edgar, and Barrie Helmer, are employed on a permanent basis, Canawest also hires a large number of Vancouver animators for freelance work. According to Cathy Madsen, "Our connections in the American Northwest, as well as in Western Canada, enable us to obtain many contracts from both areas. Along with animated commercials for Hollywood Pacific and the National Bank of Seattle, we have produced TV serials for Hanna-Barbera, such as *Abbott and Costello*, *The Beatles*, and *Wait Till Your Father Gets Home*. These serials follow the traditional animation style esta-

EVERYTHING ELSE

WHITE



NOTE * MOUTH WHEN OPEN

MIDDLE RED B

The Rocking Horse made by Hoskin and Morris for *Sesame Street* complete with instructions

blished by the Hanna-Barbera studios."

In Canada, Canawest has produced films for the governments of Saskatchewan and Alberta. One of these commercials, a 30-second spot, entitled *Aware*, made for the Saskatchewan alcohol control program, won an award at the US TV Commercial Festival. The animation division of Canawest also produces titles and inserts for films made in their live-action studio.

Although the majority of animated films produced in Vancouver have been made for commercial or informational purposes, the NFB continues to provide an alternative as a non-commercial forum. The NFB's contribution to animation is a substantial one. With the introduction of a regionalization policy, a few years ago, both a regional approach to animation and the personal styles of west coast animators have emerged at the NFB.

The animation section of the NFB's Vancouver division was established four years ago. In 1974, the group moved to its present location on Vancouver's Granville St.

Don Worobey recently became head of the animation division, taking over from John Taylor, another Vancouver animator. After graduating from the Vancouver School of Art in 1970, Worobey did a postgraduate year with animator Ryan Larkin. He then worked for the NFB in their Inuit animation workshop at Cape Dorset: "I started working with animation because though I had been trained as a painter, I wanted my work to move; to be dynamic. Eventually, I decided to become completely involved with film.

"I think my orientation towards animation is different from many of the other animators in Vancouver. The majority of them are basically character animators; interested in



A Quiet Day by Al Sens

storyline and character development. I'm predominantly a visual animator. I'm excited by abstract design and geometric shapes; the conceptual and experimental aspects of film.

"The concern here at the NFB remains with the fairly traditional NFB approach to animation. The style and overall orientation is towards films with social commentary, and which emphasize social issues. However, I do feel that animation produced at the Vancouver studio does possess definite regional flavor and character, both in its subject matter and approach. Films here tend to be lighter, more humorous, and less overtly political."

The NFB in Vancouver has funded diverse projects in the past, which have been quite successful in commercial theatres as well. **Land Use**, by Hugh Folds, is a theatrical short made for use by community groups, detailing the trials of a young couple who attempt to go back to the land. **The Twitch** by Al Sens (in collaboration with Hugh Folds and Wayne Morris) is a film about prejudice, which focuses on a king with this particular disability. It was shown in local commercial theatres along with **Jaws**. Hugh Folds and Wayne Morris also produced **Citizen Harold**, which received an honorable mention at the Australian Film Festival. **TV Sale**, by Ernie Schmidt, provided a satiric look at television, and was also shown in local commercial theatres.

Due to budget constraints, production has been cut by about half. Yet, several projects are currently underway; a film about supertankers off

the northwest coast, a documentary about children's animation, and some theatrical shorts. Worobey himself is currently working on a film about Egyptian architecture with experimental filmmaker Al Razutis.

Worobey is particularly pleased with certain aspects of the NFB's program. "One of the innovative features of the Vancouver program is the support that is available to the beginning and the independent filmmaker. If the NFB likes the rushes of a film, and the filmmaker lacks the funding or the facilities to complete it, the NFB will provide the needed funding and facilities. If the final film is thought to be good, the NFB will buy it from the filmmaker, paying up to \$5,000, and consider the film to be an NFB production. If not, all rights revert back to the filmmaker. The NFB will also buy complete films and script ideas from local filmmakers."

Locally, the NFB maintains strong ties with the Vancouver School of Art. Their consultation services are made available to students, along with occasional use of NFB facilities. Some graduates of the VSA have come to work for the NFB on special projects.

Worobey would like to encourage greater film and script production, and more experimental techniques of animation (i.e., computer and optical animation), but budget constraints make this difficult. He is also somewhat frustrated by what he believes to be excessive centralized control by the NFB.

"Budgets must be approved by the bureaucracy and unfortunately projects from the west are pitted in com-

petition for funding against those from other regional offices. However, since the NFB is less subject to commercial pressures, we are still able to get a considerable amount of support for developing and refining various ideas."

Al Sens is perhaps the best known and most influential of the Vancouver animators. Sens, who runs his own independent animation studio, began making animated films in the 1950s. He has done work for the NFB, the CBC, Simon Fraser University, the University of British Columbia, the Learning Corporation of America, Cinemedia, Infomedia, Public Service Commercials, and Habitat, as well as numerous independent projects. His many films include **A Quiet Day**, **The Twitch**, **Puppet Dream**, **The See Hear Talk Dream** and **Act Film**, **The Sorcerer**, **Timmy**, and **The Bureaucracy**. He has been mentioned as a major Canadian filmmaker in Ralph Stephenson's book, *The Animated Film*, a part of the International Film Guide Series. As a past teacher at the Vancouver School of Art, and present instructor in UBC's Theatre Department, Sens has also influenced the work of many Vancouver animators.

Sens became interested in animation as a vehicle for the further development of the cartoons he had been drawing for magazines like *The Post* and *Maclean's*: "I got into animation because I felt it would allow me to extend the characters and ideas I had originated, in a combination of graphics and short stories. I was self-taught; there really was no place to study animation in those days. However, my work was influenced by various European graphic artists such as Richard Williams, animators like George Dunning, Chuck Jones, and Tex Avery.

"To me, animation is a hybrid art form. In fact, I really don't think that there are many similarities between live-action and animation. Actually, animation itself is more like an individual actor."

While Sens asserts that he likes the freedom of working as an independent, he emphasized that if the workload becomes too heavy, there's a good "telephone network" of people who can help out with the technical and graphic work.

"I find that my style is constantly changing. I like to experiment with different methods, particularly those techniques which help to alleviate some of the more tedious aspects of cell animation. I also enjoy caricature and the various aspects of characterization. Of course, sometimes the techniques you can use are limited by cost and by the demands of a particular client."

Sens describes most of his films as mild social commentary, usually made within an interpersonal context: "To me, the content is more important than the technique, and I enjoy making my points with humor. Paradoxically, the restrictions in terms of content and humor are less stringent in commercial work than in most educational projects. Often educational groups are so intent on getting across the facts, they can become too didactic. Personally, I like to lighten difficult clinical or technical information and convert it into a more generalized type of film."

Sens's ability to achieve this type of balance is evident in the series of films about learning disabilities which he made for Simon Fraser University. Ordinarily a difficult and even painful subject, Sens, using a combination of stills and cell animation, manages to both enliven and enlighten.

Teaching at UBC has enabled Sens to supplement his earnings as a filmmaker and to enrich his style and perception: "I get a different perspective from my students. An engineering student, for example, has a very different approach to animation than I do, and I can get new ideas from this type of orientation."

Both Sens and his cameraperson, Richard Bruce, agree that since funding is such a problem for filmmakers/animators, they would like to see a system implemented that would be similar to that of the medieval guild. In this type of apprenticeship system, a beginning animator could learn by actually making films, and be ensured of some form of monetary support during this time period.

Another of the small independent companies in Vancouver is Synch-Pop Animation Studios, founded by filmmakers Mal Hoskin and Wayne Morris, and accountant Paul Royce. Both Hoskin and Morris attended VSA. During that time, they were co-subjects in a CBC television documentary about young filmmakers in Canada. Animated films produced by Morris and Hoskin during their student years received distribution by Universal Films.

After graduating from the Vancouver School of Art, Hoskin taught a course at VSA for three years. In 1974, he founded Synch-Pop Studios with Morris and Royce.

Since the establishment of the company, Hoskin and Morris have produced, among other films, sequences for the CBC's French section of *Sesame Street*, animated segments of a navy training film, a film about physical fitness (made in collaboration with Al Sens), and various commercials

and advertising shorts. These films include *Metric System* and *Metric Slide Show* for the Provincial Educational Media Centre of B.C., the '74 *Tax Guide* for Canadian Cinegraph of B.C., and commercials for Rainier Beer, the *Rolf Harris Show*, *What's the Good Word?*

Wayne Morris has worked as an animator, scriptwriter, and director on various productions. He has also worked on films for the NFB; *Citizen Harold*, *Tilt*, *BC Centennial Clips*, and *For the Good of Mankind*.

As Hoskin states, "We like having our own company and being in control of our situation. Our talents mesh well, and complement each other. Wayne concentrates on character animation, whereas I tend to prefer abstract and logo work. Then again, Wayne has a fairly definite style, whereas mine is subject to constant change."

Morris remarks, "Our style is basically traditional cell animation. I'm personally interested in characterization and the dramatic possibilities of scripted animation, rather than just film technique. I have a well-established animation style, which I'm quite happy with. In developing this style, I'd say that I was influenced by American cartoons - Disney characters, and Daffy Duck and Bugs Bunny, etc. I think what I'd really like to see is that type of animation technique applied to a dramatic situation; or a situation with a socio-political content; a kind of animated Pogo strip."

One of Vancouver's independent animators is Audrey Doray, a well-known artist and sculptor. Doray views herself primarily as a painter and sculptor, who began working in animation as a result of her frustration with the static image: "I was always fascinated by the idea of motion. I experimented with different materials in terms of light pattern and movement; for example, paintings with sound tracks and moving sculptures. Gradually, I realized that my work involved a cyclical repetition of



The goat from *Zodiac* by independent animator Audrey Doray

image patterns. I thought animation would enable me to accomplish this type of image flow on a smaller and more manageable scale."

Doray's first film *Zodiac* involved cell animation of drawings depicting the interaction between the 12 signs of the zodiac and the four basic elements; fire, air, earth and water.

Her current project, as yet unfinished, is entitled *Poppy Talk*. As Doray describes the film, "It concerns the lyrical yet somber contrasts between a poppy and an iron gate. The whole concept can be viewed on different levels; the poppy as the symbol of the battlefield, as a part of the cycle of nature, a mystical symbol, or a representation of the pop culture." The film is to be a combination of animation and live action, color and black and white.

Unlike many other Vancouver animators, Doray works solely on an independent basis: "I feel that my films are highly personal, and this is probably the reason that except for occasional technical assistance, I tend to work alone."

At the present time, Doray has temporarily abandoned animation for the production of a slide/sound documentary about China, which she visited a year ago: "I could see making an animated film about China or a film with animated sequences. Animation could be a very powerful political tool. For example, an animated newsreel or certain Czech animated films I have seen are extremely simple and direct but also incorporate a statement about the human condition."

"I like animation to be compressed; short and relatively simple. Otherwise, I feel there is a danger of information overload, from too much stimulus. Through my work in sculpture, I've learned that it is very important to pay attention to the projection span of a potential audience. I appreciate a director like Antonioni, who holds a shot and give you time to absorb all the information which is in that particular shot."

In general, the animation scene in Vancouver is an active one, which given the opportunity could become even more vital and exciting. Many other filmmakers such as Howard Peddlar, Norman Drew, Marv Newlands, John Taylor, Ken Wallis, Richard Watson, an Malcolm Collett are also working in the animation field. Students too numerous to mention individually, as well as amateur animators, are also busy honing their skills in courses at the Vancouver School of Art, UBC and SFU. With this type of training combined with the highly personal west coast style, Vancouver animators will continue to contribute interesting dimensions to Canadian animation. □

plasticine and puppet people

by Neil Warren



First Hunt from the *Inuit* series, Animette Canada's fourth series of puppet-animated films

The world of animation, Disney, and the cartoon character. But what of the three-dimensional group – the puppet film? Puppets? Immediately you associate strings, marionettes, or even a 'Punch and Judy'. Yet the process of puppet animation is much more involved than simply pulling strings... and it's fighting for recognition and a place in Canada's film industry and culture. In Europe, as everybody knows, puppetry is a tradition, particularly due to the influence of Jiri Trinka and his followers. They created a sort of 'theatre of the old', where the emotional magic of animation gave life and personality to a totally 'dead' thing, and people could lose themselves in these films. Well, a part of this culture and magic is finally starting to develop in this country. More independent groups are breaking away from the conventional cell work, and exploring new areas in the three-dimensional field.

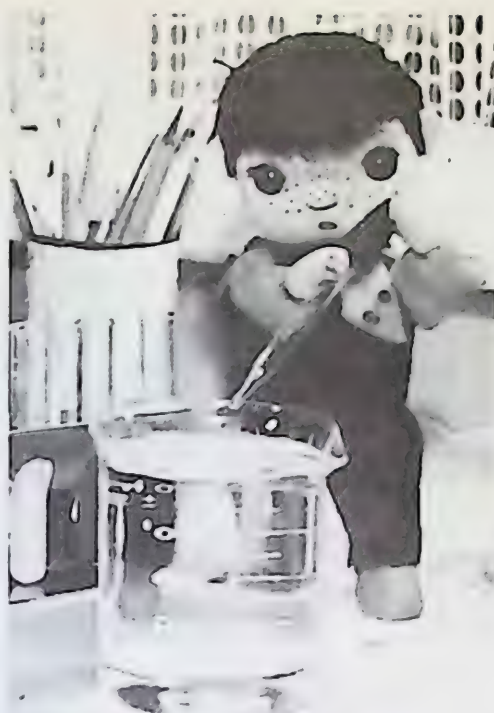
Neil Warren is a 'plasticine' puppet animator presently freelancing for CBC and independent groups. Graduated from Conestoga College, Film in 1975, he is working on a children's short ('plasticine') for TV at the moment, as well as a promotional film. His first professional experience was with Animette, Canada.

Take, for example, 'plasticine'. That miracle substance that you can bend, shape, mold into almost anything. When combined with the film medium, it can be given 'life' and accomplish any number of fantasies. The material is becoming increasingly popular in commercials, childrens' shows, and even current events programs, mainly due to its abstract appearance and malleability. The major problem encountered with 'plasticine' is its lack of resistance to heat, but with several large fans surrounding your miniature set, you can keep your actors 'cool' enough to manipulate.

Cineplast, formed by Marc Chinoy in 1969, used the 'plasticine' technique to a great extent. Peter Dewdney, who is now with Nelvana Ltd., worked with Chinoy on a number of projects, the first being a series of animated inserts for *Sesame Street*. The beginning films were very abstract, using a transformation technique of one character flowing into another – with a complete absence of sets and props. After a series of these segments, Cineplast became involved with commercial work in, variously, advertising for beer, childrens' vitamins, and paper towels. They drifted towards other media with these projects, including plastics and paper, but in 1972, returned to 'plasticine' when Taurus Films of Germany approached the company with a pilot for a proposed series titled *Wildman*. The completed program was successful and launched the series. As a result, Cineplast moved to Munich, leaving a few memories, and the challenge for other 'plasticine' animators in Canada to take over where they left off.

Yet animators of this sort are scarce at the moment. I believe there is a group involved in Quebec, as well as Ray Ethier of Crawley Films, Ottawa, and myself. Peter Dewdney, who spent several months with Chinoy in Munich, felt that North Americans are less receptive to the 'plasticine' /puppet medium than Europeans, but this attitude is already changing, and hopefully the technique will develop and expand here in Canada within the next few years.

Equally as popular as 'plasticine' animation is the puppet group. Animette, Canada produces puppet films for children, at a small production company located in Thornhill, Ontario. Its goal is to create a visionary world with imaginary characters to which children, its main audience, will relate. Directed to an age group close to dolls and puppets, their films present a simple moral or message to the small fry, without being too overbearing. A child's psyche can relate



Experiment, from the series *Welcome to Our Small World*, puts its emphasis on teaching, with lessons in chemistry, mathematics and basic shapes

to the medium, and in a sense, learn what the puppets are trying to teach – and that's what the producers, Ali and Milo Kubik, find rewarding. The money is minimal, the publicity is almost nil, but it's mainly love of the work that keeps them going. And there are never enough of these films for kids.

By definition, three-dimensional animation is an exacting process giving simulated life to an inanimate object, via single-frame exposure. It is a technique involving hours and hours of tedious work in tiring body positions. The principles of live-action filmmaking are basically involved, except that in animation, one or two people are in charge of everything. Sets, props, characters are all on a miniature scale, with their boundaries confined to a huge table top. Actors are constructed from wood and metal ball and socket armatures. (I suppose the advantage over live action is that the characters are not capable of forming a union.) Perspective is very important, as well as a certain amount of stylization in the puppets. The Kubiks try not to be bound by reality, as their intention is not to imitate life, but to create an imaginary world with imaginary creatures who do not talk, but rather speak through pantomimed actions. It creates a visual, almost universal language. The characters are simple, yet possess an air of gentleness and purity without being too wholesome. They are in a totally different class from the science-fiction and commercial animated puppets common in US features and shorts.

The Kubiks both worked professionally in Czechoslovakia – Milo in the film business and Ali on the stage, in opera. Ali's first encounter with three-dimensional animation came through Slovak Cinematography, a group trying to establish a special studio strictly for puppet work. In August of 1968, the Kubiks left the country with their daughter Milada and son Peter, to settle in Canada. They hoped to continue their careers in filmmaking in totally new conditions in a different cultural climate, and after the usual hardships, they secured work with the CBC in Toronto. The Kubiks have been in the animation business for six years now, and this is the first serious initiative by the professional press to discuss their work. Otherwise, nobody seems interested. They are not publicity-seeking people, but need to be known in order to continue working. The Kubiks see puppet animation in its pioneering stage here, useful for commercials, promotional and educational films. Unfortunately, there is still that fight for recognition to be won against cartoons.

Animette, Canada has produced four series of films distributed commercially in Toronto. Each series provides children with fables that roughly parallel their own experience. The first, **Adventures in the High Grass**, involves a community of bugs and their experiences in ecology and nature. The second, **Welcome to Our Small World**, involves the same characters in a variety of stories concerning elementary science. The third series, with the stylization closer to human proportions, takes a trip to the farm with **Lisa and Her Friends**. The emphasis in these films is on human values. The final series, **Inuit** involves 13 films based on Eskimo folklore. Each is a separate, original tale written by Ali Kubik. The stories encompass a wide range of elements, both fantastic and imaginative, and the Kubiks felt that in doing the series, they would be contributing to the enrichment of Canada's culture.

In the four series, a total of 52 films were produced by Animette, Canada. That's almost four and a half hours of film shot frame by frame. Mathematically, that is 270 minutes, which equals 15600 seconds. As there are 24 frames per second, it was necessary to make 374,000 clicks of the camera shutter and miniature movements of the puppets. This calculation gives us an idea what puppet animation means in reality, and clearly shows the amount of patience Ali Kubik must possess to bring her 'actors' to life. □

montreal animating upstairs

by Connie Tados



Sketches for a Bank of Montreal commercial: Michael Mills Productions

Crowded rooms at the top of long flights of stairs, gay drawings pinned on the walls and bodies bent over light tables, miscellaneous people who come and go and sometimes actually work with a skeleton staff of five. There you have a composite picture of the functioning animation studios in Montreal. These studios – Michael Mills Productions, Boxcar Films, Kohill Productions, Disada and Les Films Quebec Love – share still another characteristic: strong feelings about the National Film Board of Canada.

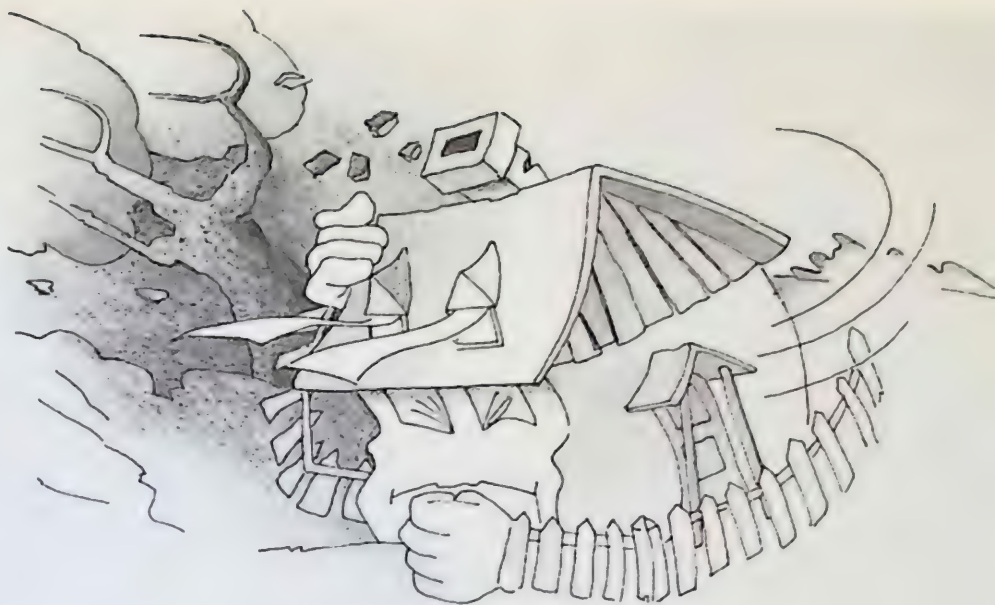
Michael Mills Productions

Michael Mills Productions, like Boxcar, sprang from the ashes of Potterton Productions.* After seven years at the NFB, Mills had taken a leave of absence to direct, design and adapt Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*; Potterton held the overall producer's contract with *Reader's Digest*. The success of this TV special, following hard on the heels of his successful NFB short *Evolution*, prompted Mills to open his own studio rather than return to the Film Board.

Being on his own, Mills says, is fantastic. "The Film Board drove me up the wall, to be honest. There's a sense of freedom there but the pace is so damn slow. A lot of ideas took so long to get off the ground; all that red tape..." Nevertheless, his prior training in England and his long association with the NFB have produced an animator who is devoted to experimentation and technology.

About 85% of Mills' work is in animation, the rest being in special-effects commercials using a combination of animation and live action. Currently he is working on packaging a half-hour special for TV, but the bulk of his contracts are for commercials and he is happy with the outlet they give him to work on experimental techniques. Generally, he says, clients want him to become involved in the initial concepts and, perhaps as a result, his commercial work is very satisfying.

What does he like about Montreal? Ironically, it's the presence of the Film Board. "They've got lots of



A house catching cold for a Union Gas commercial: Michael Mills Productions

lovely equipment. While I can't use half of it, I can go up and prod it and poke it and find out how it all works. And I do actually hire it if I can't find similar equipment elsewhere." Just lately, for instance, he rented out the Board's aerial-image camera which was bought when he was at the Board and which, as far as he knows, has to date only been used by him.

Mills opened an office in Toronto and has a representative in New York. The motivation was partly defensive, in case Montreal proved lukewarm to an English animator. Now he states that 75% of his work is in French and that he's had to neglect the Toronto office for the time being. Recently he did get some work from a Toronto agency – when it went down to New York to find an animator and saw Mills' show reel. The agency came back north and gave the job to Mills – the great Canadian way, *n'est-ce pas?*

Boxcar Films

Two young animators who worked along with Mills at Potterton, Julian Szuchopa and Paul Sabella, founded Boxcar Films two years ago. Paul had done some freelance work at the NFB, having been trained in fine arts in Egypt, but Julian just happened along when Potterton was starting out and was trained on the job. Again, it was Potterton's demise that got them into business for themselves.

Their work is basically commercial, with about 10% coming from the educational field – mostly *Sesame Street* contracts straight from New York. They echo Mills' feeling that commercials call for creativity and emphasize that agencies are always

looking for fresh approaches, new effects. Boxcar is in good shape, according to the owners, because they offer more for the money. "We try to give something special, something the client wouldn't get elsewhere." As long as they can continue to produce good, creative work, Szuchopa and Sabella say, they are optimistic.

Still they speak with surprise when they mention that their commercial for H. Salt Fish and Chips of Toronto won a prize at the Canadian TV Commercial Festival. Boxcar is a low-key, low-profile operation. Nevertheless, having tasted glamor once, they've entered a film in Ottawa 76.

Business has recently started coming in from the Quebec government and Boxcar is now a very busy place. The future doesn't worry them. "Potterton went under because it got too big and it made a few mistakes financially. When you have a company the size of Boxcar, you have control over it." Having just bought an animation camera, Boxcar is still growing.

Kohill Productions

In the west end of Montreal, Kohill Productions has been operating for about two years. Koos Hillenaar founded the company after six years of freelance work, and now counts the CBC (*Sesame Street*) and ad agencies as his principal clients. Having been trained in Holland, and having worked in Germany and Sweden, Hillenaar specializes in 3-D or puppet animation, a genre less popular in Canada than in Europe.

Over the years, his clientele has changed from being almost entirely educational to being almost entirely commercial, a change which he is not sure he likes.

* Potterton Productions Inc. was founded in 1968 and went bankrupt in 1974. It had 20 permanent employees and hired freelancers – sometimes over 100 at a time – when work demanded. Besides producing five feature-length animated films, Potterton also produced three live-action features (*Fleur bleue*, *The Rainbow Boys* and *Child Under a Leaf*). It is generally thought that these last features, coupled with an exaggerated overhead, were responsible for the downfall of the company. Gerald Potterton is currently working – in California. Ed.



Unhappy hamburgers in a Boxcar production (H. Salt Fish and Chips) made for designer Dino Kotopoulos

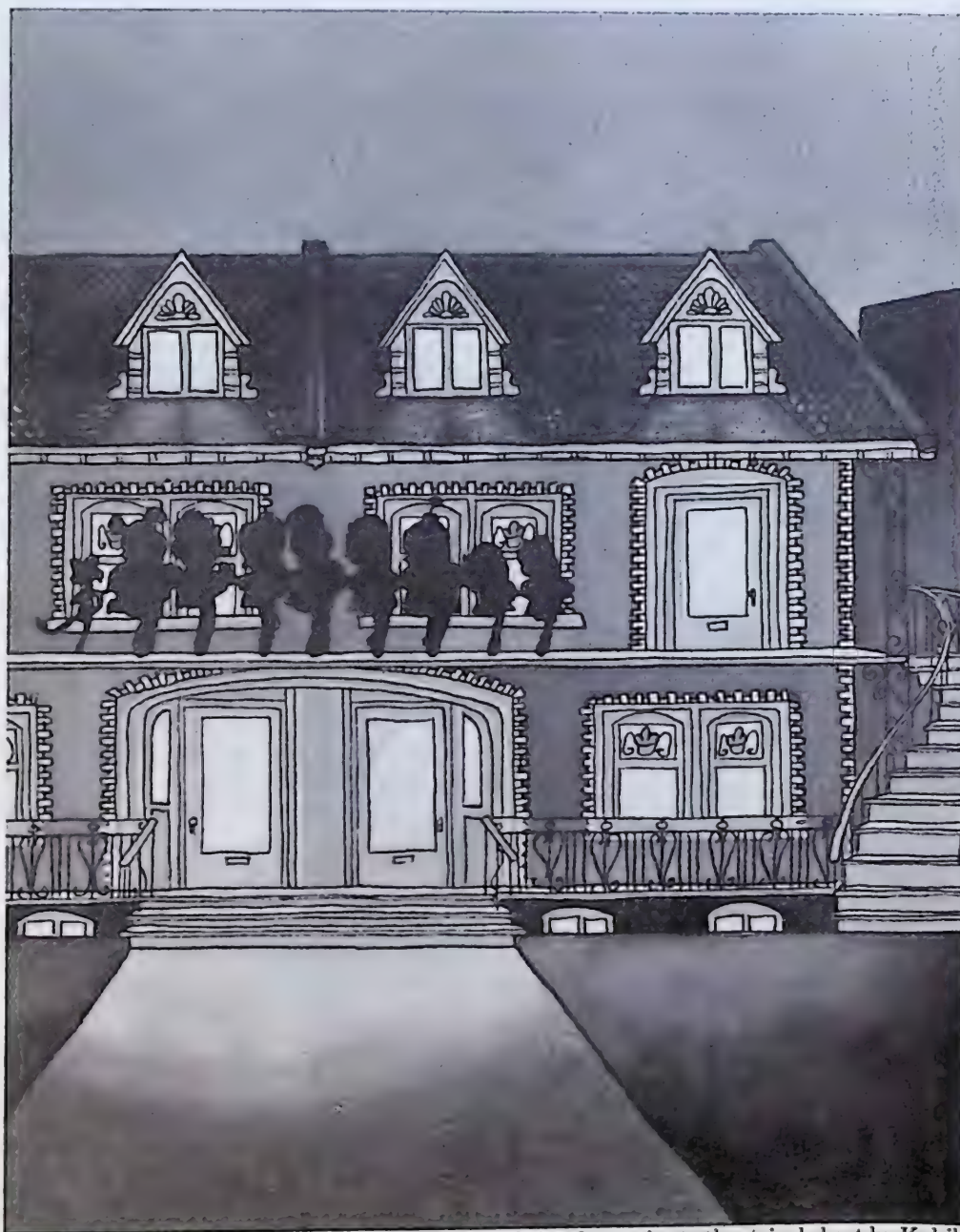
"I prefer working in educational films because there's a lot more freedom, freedom to be creative. Commercials have just one thing in mind: to sell the product. Plus the advertising agencies themselves get involved in the creative part. In educational work, we do 75% of the creative work ourselves."

Hillenaar speaks about the enormous market in the US for educational films (where most of his work comes from) and states that Canada has neither the money nor the market to support large, specialized products. He has done a film on reading for the deaf. "In Canada, there are only three or four big institutions which could buy a program like that. Here, there just isn't the market."

The demand for animated films follows the demand for film in general, and has its own ups and downs besides. "There seem to be periods of three or four years when animation gets more popular," Hillenaar points out. "Everyone wants to insert some animation into his product, whether it be commercial or documentary. And then there are years when it goes down, when it's not as fashionable to use it." Hillenaar feels that the demand has diminished recently and looks forward to the day when animation will again be greeted with greater enthusiasm.

Disada

Both Disada and Les Films Quebec Love stemmed from amateur groups pooling their resources to make their own films and later converting themselves into bonafide businesses.



Hequo '76, a four-minute theatrical short by Kohill



Winnie Witch and the Giant Potato: Disada Productions Ltd.

Peter Adamakos, the president of Disada, had been making animated films since elementary school. Disada was a grouping of enthusiasts which functioned for five years before becoming professional in 1970. During the initial period, material and equipment was bought through subscriptions paid by the users, and many projects were realized by the collective efforts of the members. Like the other Montreal companies, 80% of the work Disada does today comes from the sponsored field; about 55% are commercials, the rest are educational films. The remaining 20% are films which Disada makes for itself. Adamakos remarks that all the educational films made by his company come from the States. "I don't think we've ever done a Canadian educational. That's because of the Film Board's being here."

One can almost see Adamakos changing hats, picking up the "president-of-the-Society-of-Filmmakers" cap which he wore last year, as he talks about the NFB. "The main stumbling block to animation in Canada is the National Film Board. And as long as the NFB continues to have a monopoly in live action or in animation, we're never going to have a film industry, much less an animation industry. I know most people believe it and are afraid to say it but I'd rather be right than popular." Adamakos does mention that the rising costs of live-action films are making animated films more competitive. He hopes that pay TV will also help the animation industry.

The future is promising. "As our audience gets more sophisticated and our concepts of film more abstract and philosophical, we are going to need films to illustrate things like

housing shortages and what-not. These complex subjects can only be shown in an entertaining way through animation," he comments. "There is still something about a moving drawing that attracts people to watch. If **Barry Lyndon** had been animated, no one would have complained."

Les Films Quebec Love

The young, enthusiastic animators who constitute Les Films Quebec Love are a product both of the revolution in Quebec's educational system which created the Université de Québec, and of the federal government's subsidy programs called Local Initiatives and Opportunities for Youth. Fresh from the university film program, they set themselves up as a cooperative and managed to make their own films using grant money. Today, understanding that grants don't go on forever (they did receive 7 LIP grants) and having exhausted the Canada Council too, they have reorganized to "go professional".

With Nicole Robert as president, Quebec Love has created its own hierarchy and is going after commercial contracts. So far, work has come in from the Olympic Organizing Committee, from agencies, and from other producers who want animated credits for their films. Quebec Love has a special relationship with Québécois artists; it took its name from a song by Charlebois which it animated and now Beau Dommage, a musical group, has just written a song expressly for them. Robert hopes that her company will be able to work within the artists' domain, specializing in films which stem from live shows.

In working with shorts, Robert believes that animated films communicate more quickly to the spectator. They tend to be funny, attractive films. As for features, the public wants films which reflect everyday reality. She wonders if bits of animation couldn't be inserted in live-action features. "Animation is fun," Robert says, "it's the candy. But it can hardly take the place of the whole meal."

Not only are all of these companies located physically upstairs (with the exception of Kohill), all of them but Disada sprang up two years ago. Potterton's disappearance helped, and perhaps so did the NFB's decision not to enlarge its permanent staff. Certainly, it is not possible to animate in Montreal without being aware of the Film Board. The independent studios hire NFB-trained freelancers to help them complete projects, and are thankful for the help which the NFB staffers are always ready to give. Nevertheless, the pace and the wealth of the NFB combine to create resentment. One can't help but wonder what the profile of animation in Montreal would be, were the NFB to clearly define its role and leave to the private sector as much work as this sector could bear. □



Stepping out for Les Films Quebec Love

john straiton

for the love of it

by Barry and Greg Thomson



Horseplay



Animals in Motion



Eurynome

You have been labeled an amateur filmmaker. Professionals can be amateurs, in that they maintain an idealism, a love for making films.

An amateur is one who loves what he does. The reason I am into animation is because I happen to be able to do a lot of things in that area – not easily, but I can do things that not many individuals can do all as one person. Some people can write, others can draw, others can think editorially, while some people are technical. I can do all these as one person; that solves communication problems and eliminates a lot of psychological problems that working with other people might involve. I don't have to earn my living in film.

*Let's talk about your intentions. In **The Portrait of Lydia** there are recurring motifs and images which apply to other of your films – women, snake, horse.*

Portrait of Lydia was my first and – as far as I knew at the time – last film. So I just poured all kinds of images that I had scraped together into the one film. Then I started making other films and each one has one or more aspects from **Portrait of Lydia**. But **Portrait of Lydia** contained a lot of my inner feelings, ideas, images.

Barry and Greg Thomson, freelance writers from Toronto, are both graduates of York University where they worked, respectively as Associate Editor and Book Editor, on Pulse Magazine.

*Let's discuss the image sequence in **The Portrait of Lydia**. Images appear to follow a pattern; for example, there is a Bible, a courtroom, a woman, a skull, then a tombstone and so on.*

I planned the film so that it goes in cycles because the music went in cycles. That is the reason for the repetition. Toward the end of the film I gave up the cycles because I got bored drawing the same things over and over. Up till then I stuck to my plan.

The basic idea of the film was about a girl who lived in a middle-sized Ontario town who was breaking free from her inhibitions. All my theories about religion and life are in the film. For example, religion is the super-ego which is ingrained by parents and the church. Lydia breaks free in her nakedness and someone touches her. Bang! All of a sudden the father appears, then the church and so forth. Her death is the ultimate punishment, probably.

Basically, the film represents the girl's thoughts about love, sex, marriage.

Could you explain why Freud and Jung and mythology in general are catalysts to your animation ideas?

Well, when I made **Portrait of Lydia** I was in fact carrying out a hunch I'd had years ago. I had been wondering whether there was some connection between art appreciation and dream symbolism. If in dreams a tree or shrubbery has a

Filmography

JOHN STRAITON

The Portrait of Lydia: 1963-64. Animator, John Straiton; music, Franz Schubert, Eighth Symphony; 16 mm, color, 8 min. *The film deals with the myth of art history. All the images are famous Western paintings. "Basically the film represents the girl's thoughts about love, sex and marriage." (J.S.)*

Steam Ballet: 1966-67. Photography and editing by John Straiton; music, Glen Willer, In The Mood; 16 mm, color, 4 min. *A montage of moving images of machinery – cogs, wheels and camshafts – seem made to move to the Miller mood.*

The Banshees: 1966-67. Photography, sculpture and animation by John Straiton; music, Igor Stravinsky, Firebird; 16 mm, color, 8:05 min. *Fairytale-like images of fire and night and shapes that seem to come alive.*

Animals in Motion: 1968. Animator, John Straiton; photographed by Edward Muybridge from 1877-85; 16 mm, sepia, 7 min. Music, show music from 1880-90 period. *Witty montage of Muybridge's serious studies is a spirited romp through his collected photographs.*

Eurynome: 1969-70. Animation and sculpture by John Straiton; 16 mm, color, 6:30 min. Music, Gustav Mahler, Seventh Symphony. *Sensual as plasticine can be, a lot of myths are mixed in a strangely heavy allegory of a woman, a snake and some consequences.*

Horseplay: 1972-73. Animator, John Straiton; producer, Mrs. Louise Clinton; music composed and synchronized by Bill Cordray; 16 mm, color, 6:38 min. *Sparsely limned, this treatment of a clever anecdote of a woman and a centaur on a sunny afternoon is as frisky as the tale (pun intended) with a delightful twist... at the end, of course.*

Les portes de l'enfer (The Gates of Hell): Animated film in progress. *Based on Rodin's sculpture.*

particular meaning I wondered whether that kind of thing made certain images attractive because they played on those symbols in the mind. I did a painting one time based on a famous reclining nude by George Wan. Then I took the various parts of the body and superimposed little miniature paintings over them. A breast became a nicely rounded hill in a landscape, for instance.

I've always felt that there was a certain amount of truth in the things Freud was groping for. It's a very inexact science and I put it to the test by making the film. Most people are quite unaware that I've done that and that's fine. People look at it and like it or dislike it for their own reasons. One woman may see a horse as a male symbol and another way see it as a symbol of aggression and another may see it as a father image. But it's hard to deny that horses are attractive to look at, for one reason or another.

I got interested in Jung only recently. He goes way further than Freud, of course, and I think he gets a little on the silly side. But he tracks down mythology to the idea that there are basic human characteristics shown in myths. Mythologies of different countries often run quite parallel to one another. The Canadian Indians and the Japanese; the South American Indians and the Europeans have many things in common with one another in their early stories and myths. I try to go back to those things so I'll have a reasonably good chance of making a film that will appeal broadly and have a long, long life rather than being something that is merely a comment on the passing moment.

Mythology, of course, is a good subject matter for animation because so much of it involves transformations and monsters and so on.

Your first development of a myth as a whole would be the one with the serpent – Eurynome.

Well, consciously using myth. The myth of Eurynome was my excuse to put on the screen what I really wanted there.

I did make a short film on Marilyn Monroe before I started being a little more serious. You can shoot a film in an evening if you work at it hard and I did one on Marilyn Monroe one evening on my vacation.

A film on Marilyn Monroe – that's mythology! Later I thought that since there is so much material available on Marilyn Monroe that I'd do a larger work. I thought I should start with Athena and work through various goddesses to Clara Bow. One continuous dissolve through Betty Boop and so on till we end with Marilyn Monroe.

Incidentally in **Eurynome**, each time I made any kind of movement with the plasticine figure I destroyed the piece of sculpture. I had to have something to refer to. The woman's face is that of Marilyn Monroe. It's not really recognizable as such but that's the image I used.

Did you research Greek myth in any detail?

I did a lot of reading in that area. Let me tell you how the film came about. I started out to do a film called **Three Loves**, based on paintings I had seen of Zeus who seduced people in various forms; as a shower of gold, as a swan, as a bull, as a serpent and various other things. I decided that since the serpent-and-woman relationship was always kind of a shocker I'd put that and **Europa and the Bull** and **Leda and the Swan** together in one film. I intended to make a mythological trilogy. I shot **Leda and the Swan**, but the figures were so tiny and the animation so bad that it didn't work. Also, the action between Leda and the Swan was so bestial that I've only shown it to one or two people. I was so discouraged I abandoned the whole project.

But, during the next six months to a year I learned a lot of things. I learned not to make little plasticine figures. I made the basic female plasticine figure a foot high instead of a few inches and started again.

In order to do those three stories I used Robert Graves' book on mythology. He has many interesting insights. He's much like Fraser and others who are into psychological and



John Straiton

sociological study of mythic content. The first myth in Graves' book is about the serpent and the woman. In the recounting of this myth she rose from the sea and I just couldn't make the sea out of plasticine. The rocks in **Eurynome** I got from another myth which explained the creation of man by giants throwing rocks at one another and the rocks turning into people. There are all kinds of bits and pieces from mythology that I compressed into the one film.

Why did you use a real clip of a hydrogen bomb explosion in Eurynome?

I couldn't make a plasticine explosion. I don't like the explosion very much, but I needed something to wipe out the sexual arousement and I thought that was pretty strong.

Why did you choose Mahler's music for Eurynome?

A friend of mine suggested it when I asked, "What would be a good piece of music?" and that was it. The rest of the film's soundtrack was made by a woman who worked for the (advertising) agency who liked to experiment with sound. It's quite an incredible job. There are seven or eight layers of sound on the track. I owe her a debt of gratitude since the film wouldn't be as good without the sound affects.

On the program of your films recently exhibited at the Ontario Science Centre by the Ontario Film Theatre there is a note written on Steam Ballet about machines being sensual. Do you find this to be so?

For some reason nobody accepted **Steam Ballet**. I noticed that whenever one of my films had a sexy quality to it people accepted it. So I thought: "What the hell, I'll write something about this film that's sexy." There are people who are amused by the movement of the machine parts. They have a humorous look. Like an eccentric dancer. That's what delighted me.

How did you come to do Steam Ballet?

It happened over a period of three or four years. One year I went to a steam engine fair and thought about doing the film. The next year I shot it in 8 mm. It looked good so I did it the following year in 16 mm.

The 8 mm version is almost identical to the 16 mm film except that a few of the more entertaining movements I couldn't find the next time around. I am not telling a story or creating an essay. More than anything else I am making interesting visuals – pretty to look at and enjoy. I didn't have any other thought in mind but what I called the film – **Steam Ballet** – and that's literally what it is. It's a dance.

I made **Steam Ballet** to go with a train song by Miller – Chattanooga Choo Choo. It had a good rhythm, but was too short. So I ran the footage I shot with different pieces of music and In the Mood worked well.

Steam Ballet was never very popular in amateur circles. It was an easy film to make and I did it quickly.

The Banshees, like Eurynome, has a destructive element: the fire.

I used to do wood carving. I'd take a root and make part of a figure out of it. I did these wood carvings years ago when I was in my 20s. On my vacation I'd find driftwood on the shore and carve a face on it.

With **The Banshees** I wanted to make a film about witches and darkness and the forest and wooden objects. At first I had in mind a film using natural roots and other shapes. Later I thought, "I've got all this sculpture. I'll slip that in too." I used the lighting to bring these things to life, to make a dance of the witches. I imagined a dark, red hole in the ground glowing upward with these creatures performing a witches' sabbath.

I was influenced by Dorothy in the **Wizard of Oz** film, the trees grabbing her and so on.



Eurynome. "She rose out of chaos and coupled with the Serpent to make the Universal Egg"

Would you explain how you came to do Animals in Motion?

Edward Muybridge published 100,000 photos or more in the late 1800s. The book I have, which contains the film's title, is 75 years old. I shot some of the film from this book, but I found I was destroying it with the animation device. So I got two collections that have been reprinted in modern times and filmed them.

The books have sequences with 12 to 20 photos to each movement study. Some of them are quite random. For example, the woman smoking was obviously taken with vertical cameras because the perspective change is from up to down at a rate of six frames a second, I would guess. I made **Animals in Motion** by leafing through these picture books and picking out amusing juxtapositions. It didn't work as well as I had hoped. The woman climbs the ladder and then the monkey climbs a stick. The monkey travels along upside down and the woman does the same. It isn't until the plump woman walks by and then the elephant walks by that the joke finally connects.

There is another one people miss. A woman is sweeping and a horse goes by, then a dog goes by and she continues sweeping. When an elephant goes by she puts the broom down. That was the Chaplin gag I was trying to use and it didn't work.

Was Animals in Motion shot in monochrome?

I shot it black and white negative and when I saw it it looked dull so I had it printed on color stock using a filter, to give an antique photographic look.

With Animals in Motion you used a technique that became synonymous with Expo 67 films: multiple screen images.

I decided to use multiple images just to show that I could do it.

What was the little piece at the end of Animals in Motion? It looks like some guy putting on his pants.

That was me.

It happened so quickly.

That's an inside joke. Muybridge had photographed himself so I did the same.

In several of your films you appear to emphasize the action by pointing it up rather than allowing the action to speak for itself. For example, in Horseplay when the woman

kisses the horse you use a cliché, having hearts burst forth, but the source of the hearts is between her legs rather than between her lips.

Both, by the way. These clichés are what they used to do in most animation but I decided to do what I did just for fun. That's playing. It's similar to Felix the Cat. When he was surprised there would be an exclamation point over his head.

*How did you choose the subject for **Horseplay**? What were the things that mainly interested you in making this film?*

That's an interesting story. There was a girl who worked at the agency who was interested in film. She said if I was making a film sometime she'd like to be involved in it somehow. She had a horse and a rather good-looking husband.



Elementary animation forms a play about a horse in **Horseplay**

With those ingredients the idea of **Horseplay** developed. I made a very tight storyboard. Then I shot the film live. Needless to say she wore a bathing suit, which I removed during the animation.

The subject was mythology. I try to choose for animation something that can't be done in some other way. What interested me was using live action as a basic for the animation. You'll notice in the film hand-held camera movement and things of that sort, which are usually not done in animation. While I was making it one of the things that was interesting to me was seeing how little drawing I could do in order to suggest an action. I had a lot of fun doing that. There are places where I used only a few lines to show the horse and the rider, getting very free or loose in my drawing style.

*Were there particular technical problems you had to solve in producing **Horseplay**?*

It seems like such a simple thing to take a figure from a piece of film, rear-project it and trace it and then do animation from that; but of course it doesn't work at all like that. You have to learn to match line for line. I had to throw away several months of work in experimenting to find out what I was doing wrong. I assumed that by adding frames up that the mind would average it out, but in fact it doesn't happen that way. The eye sees every individual frame quite clearly. For instance, when I was drawing the man's head I squiggled his hair roughly and I didn't bother to make it continuous from frame to frame. Then when I projected it, it looked as if he had a cloud dancing on top

of his head. I solved that by taking all the drawings and filling it in with solid red. There really weren't many technical problems. It was simply learning animation and as I got going and got to understand what was happening I could draw much more loosely.

How do you usually plan your films?

I do it various ways. Sometimes I write extensively first and sometimes I start off by drawing or sketching. With different films I use different methods.

You so often work with different techniques in your films – drawings, roots, plasticine, photographs. Why?

When you've done a plasticine animation film you're sick of plasticine for a while! However, I like doing plasticine animation because the result is so much more lifelike. Plasticine, more than anything else, I have found, brings the objects to life.

I don't think I will return to animating live subjects (as in **Horseplay**) ever again.

Now, I am returning to **Portrait of Lydia** techniques with my new film because I have an appropriate subject to do them with.

Do you usually title your work before you start?

My working title for my current project is **Les portes de l'enfer**, which is taken from The Gates of Hell, Rodin's sculpture. Rodin had all his important works contained in that one piece of sculpture.

I intend to explore all kinds of new themes, since as I told you I've been reading further and getting new thoughts. I've also got a lot of old ideas that I haven't used yet.

I started reading Jung in some depth for this next film I am making. I don't find him as interesting as I find Freud, who is much easier to understand.

How would you describe your visual aesthetic?

If you mean what do I like, I guess I would say I like concrete rather than abstract. When I paint I like to paint real things, real scenes. My taste is average. I am not a fan of Pollock or Warhol or Snow. In art I suppose I like the impressionist period the best. Things where people know that they're seeing art and not just some invention.

Photography is magic and filmmaking is more than magic. Where I first felt that was when I first did animation with plasticine. Literally, I felt I had created a being. Here's this little piece of plasticine and it moves its hand and looks at you. That's magic and I was thrilled with this. Magic and mythology coincide with one another. Bergman as a child was interested in magic; Orson Welles is interested in magic and Lumiere was a magician to begin with. This kind of person often gets into filmmaking.

What do you expect the audience to bring to your films?

Well, interest in the human mind, a sense of humor, a little literacy. Most of my films were made for my friends. So, I have an idea of the people I am addressing or making the film for. I expect them to know a little bit about or have some feeling for psychology and history. I expect them to want to be entertained. I always hope that my films are entertaining in their own way. I don't try to persuade anybody or change their minds about anything in particular.

What is the situation with distribution of your films?

They are handled basically by the filmmakers' co-operative (Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre) here in Toronto. There's an outfit in California distributing some of my films. I understand they owe me money and I have yet to see it. I find the whole film world to be loose and strange about money and payments. I am glad I am not trying to make a living on film work. □

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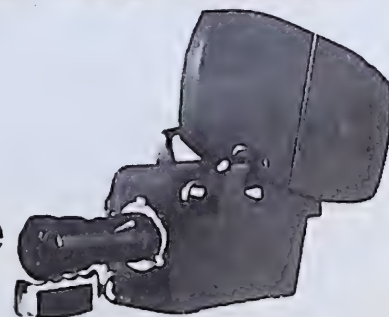
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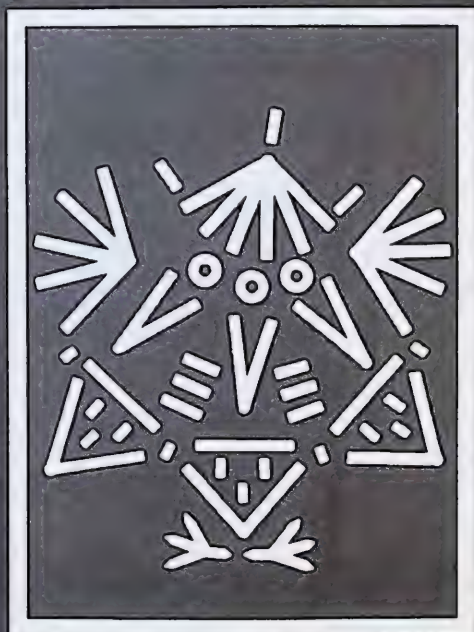


Photo from LE MERLE
A film by Norman McLaren



Photo from MINDSCAPE
A film by Jacques Drouin



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where is canadian cinema heading ?

by Serge Losique

In recent years, Canadian cinema has been the subject of innumerable discussions, controversies and oral or written statements. Since I have been working in the field of cinema in Montreal for a long time, I will venture an opinion and offer some ideas, even if they are unlikely to be accepted. I will deal with only the broad outlines because what happens behind the scenes would make a whole book, not a simple article.

We have many so-called "saviors" who are constantly speaking of the "crisis" of cinema and blaming either the government or the industry, in particular certain American companies. Of course, all these "saviors" claim to be absolutely disinterested, an attitude which leads to conflict and auto-destruction: everyone is jealous of the others and wants recognition of the divine mission which gives him a right to the taxpayer's money. Among these people are, on the one hand, federal civil servants (whom some provinces unfortunately try to emulate) who think of themselves as absolute masters capable of bringing Canadian cinema to the greatest heights, and on the other hand, a contingent of self-styled filmmakers who act as if society owed them

everything because they have made one or two films. In this unhealthy climate, empires of "kommissars", lobbying, parachuting into key positions, dirty tricks and something that vaguely resembles Northern Ireland has developed.

Of course, these problems are present elsewhere too. But nowhere else in a democratic country is public money so much a part of the game. This "cultural mafia" is the most destructive force in our country. How can this be explained? Is it the result of a political will determined to give cinema a definite direction, or of ignorance on the part of the mandarins in the field? We may one day elucidate the answer to this question.

Between these two extremes stand some people who understand that cinema has been in a perpetual crisis since its birth in 1895 because it is at the same time an art and an industry – and both are costly. Therefore, cinema is a continuous struggle, and each film goes through its own crisis even after all the contracts are signed. Fellini was in a state of financial crisis throughout the shooting of his last film *Casanova*.

This group of moderates understand that Canadian or Quebec content cannot be a guarantee of success, and that people can never be forced to see a particular film, simply because it is Canadian. Our viewers live surrounded by images and have seen the best of world films on the small or the big screen. Some groups insist that the state has to "protect" our cinema but they forget that no government in the course of history has ever created any great culture. On the contrary, creation is always unpredictable – it must not be confused with the planning of highways. As

far as cinema is concerned, the more the state will legislate, the fewer good films will be made – because cinema means "movement" and the moment this movement is supervised by civil servants, very often incompetent ones, cinema is dead or meaningless – as is the case in countries where cinema is tightly controlled.

In some circles where it *should* matter, nobody worries about the quality of our products. It is very difficult to make cinema succeed artificially while steering it in the wrong direction. It is not by protecting mediocrity that a serious cinematographic base will be created in this country. Even Bergman has rejected any further "protection" from the officials of Sweden (which is so often proposed as an example of success) and left for Hollywood.

If cinema could be reduced to the dimensions of meat, it would no doubt be easier – because there is no reason why we should be inundated by American beef when our beef is as good, if not better, than its southern counterpart. But cinema is something else. It is in constant revolution and in the western world this revolution is led by our best bourgeois creators.

The fact that this revolution originates in Hollywood, in the United States, is not surprising because Hollywood has become for cinema what Paris was for the arts at the beginning of the 20th century. Cinema is essentially the art of the masses and for that reason it is a mistake to underestimate American cinema, which provided the masses of the world with great myths of escape: love, horizons, freedom, sex, the direct justice of the frontiers, adventure... and also with modern gods

Serge Losique founded the Conservatoire d'art cinématographique at Sir George Williams University (now Concordia University), and has sponsored the Student Film Festival for eight years. This summer he was also instrumental in the organization of two festivals which coincided with the Olympics: one on cinema and sport, and the other on Canadian cinema.

and goddesses: Marlene Dietrich, Greta Garbo, Marilyn Monroe, Humphrey Bogart, Marlon Brando, Jack Nicholson...

Furthermore, we must no longer think of Hollywood as being representative only of America; indeed some of the greatest filmmakers of the world as well as the greatest stars were received and accepted in Hollywood: Mack Sennett (from Quebec), Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich, Eric Von Stroheim, Joseph Von Sternberg, Zoltan Korda, Frank Capra, Rouben Mamoulian, Alfred Hitchcock, Charles Chaplin, René Clair, Jean Renoir, Roman Polanski, Milos Forman... Also in Hollywood cinema was never limited to a particular outlook as was the case in Canada where cinema for almost 30 years was only allowed to follow the lead of the National Film Board. As if this was not enough, even now they are trying to keep us within their official lines – and then are bold enough to speak of an industry of cinema, of creation!

With just a little love and intelligence, it can be understood that this beautiful and universal language is in itself irrational and as such cannot agree with the systems of rigid institutions. It lives and develops in absolute freedom and the role of the state as the modern Maecenas is to help it directly and not through a stuffy bureaucracy which is a consequence here of the worst British traditions. One might ask, where is the British film industry today?

In the early '60s, it was under the influence of the great American films that the French produced a new concept of cinema with the films of the Nouvelle Vague. The first feature film of Jean-Luc Godard, *A bout de souffle* (*Breathless*), was an homage to John Ford. This interdependence has shown that the language of cinema, particularly fiction, cannot go far if it is locked into some sort of provincialism.

In a concrete way, what can be done in the present situation? Is it possible to construct a strong cinema with the help of narrow-minded pseudo-intellectuals, most of them disciples of the National Film Board? We naively think that by eliminating the American "majors" Canadian cinema can be created. But Montreal is only 40 miles from the American border, like most of our urban centers, and nothing can prevent our people from going to see films there, just as nothing can prevent them from rushing to Cape Cod or Miami for vacations. Even if the American-owned theatres were closed, the "majors" would still do very good business as they are doing now with 16 mm films in schools, private clubs, etc. In Spain, during the Franco regime, the least sex in cinema was considered sinful and banned. As a consequence, the French border towns made easy money by offering the Spaniards sexy films.

People want to see a film, nothing more. It is true that our federal state lacks a general policy in this field and the general impression is they haven't a clue. They should be the ones – maybe the Ministry of Industry and Commerce – to study whether foreign companies prevent our films and other films of quality from being seen by monopolizing showing and distribution.

There exist anti-trust laws in the United States too. Only healthy competition can give us access to the best films of the world. It is the role of the state to see to it that no monopoly exists in this field and that no particular country's cinema be penalized in the process. But if cinema is treated as an industry it should be treated also in the overall framework of economic relations between Canada and the US.

Consequently, I wish in this article to examine the role of the Department of the Secretary of State, the main power behind cinema activities in this country, as well as the roles of its various agencies. The problems of the Department of the Secretary of State, particularly its past problems, can be summarized by saying that it was for a long time a prisoner of the British traditions of its higher officials and that it acted mainly through the agency of the National Film Board. On the one hand, the Department wanted to create a national cinema with its own "identity", slightly overdone and artificially maintain-



Serge Losique at the Cannes festival

ed for political reasons inherent in the federal context; on the other hand, its officials acted, and still act, as if we were a socialist country, or Latin American one, or – worse still – a young African country where people have never seen films.

The desire for power and domination that characterized the predecessors of the present Secretary has brought about the malaise of the Department and of the industry as a whole. I wonder if the commercial side of cinema would not be better served within the Ministry of Industry and Commerce than the Department of the Secretary of State. It is not easy to break established empires; however, in a political sense as well as for the cultural good of Canadians, the Department of the Secretary of State must examine as soon as possible the role of its agencies. It is not by controlling whatever moves on the screen that the federal government will make us more Canadian. After all, a man who keeps insisting that he is married is not necessarily a faithful husband...

The National Film Board

Its role was at one time positive but today, when secondary schoolchildren have studios and cameras, not to mention the innumerable universities where cinema is beginning to gain roots, it is urgent that the role of the Board be reassessed. We have seen enough of the power game and vested interests in Ottawa. Now the millions given the Board could go directly to our filmmakers and cinema would fare much better. The role of the Board during the war was understandable and justified. But today, is there one great democratic country which has a branch of cinematographic propaganda? If the Board must exist, then let it exist, but it should be treated on the same footing as other crown corporations and should rely on its own resources to survive. We are living at a time of image explosion and a democratic government does not have the right to use taxpayers' money to make us tributaries of an organization that has already considerably slowed the normal evolution of Canadian cinema. The image had already won the battle against the words in 1938...

It may now be time to apply the Massey minority report (Royal Commission: Arts, Letters and Sciences, 1950) which declared that the federal government should cease financing the National Film Board. With its monopoly, the Board has done enormous prejudice to the independent sector and to those filmmakers who were not privileged to enter the Board. Where can a non-NFB documentary film be shot? So, not only have we prevented an independent sector from developing and becoming stronger but we prevented our talents from expressing themselves, which is unacceptable in a country like ours. At any rate, the Board would be more productive if it became a kind of "cinema center" – a center of cinema information, a national laboratory which would make contracts with private industry, a production company like all other private companies. As things stand now, people are wondering about the usefulness of the National Film Board with its army of functionaries.

The CFDC

Much has been said for and against this state corporation. I must admit that I, personally, am not a great fan of it. On the other hand, it must be said that the CFDC has helped Canadian cinema. The problem with the CFDC was, and still is at the present moment, that its policy is unclear and pseudo-cultural rather than industry-oriented. It is true that we lack expertise and the CFDC cannot make films in the place of filmmakers and producers. But should it not have tried in the beginning to develop such expertise instead of subsidizing mediocrity?

The idea I always supported was that the CFDC become a sort of national bank for the financing of the cinema industry (production, distribution, promotion) and that it refrain from setting itself up as a superstructure, thus repeating the mistake of the National Film Board. If a producer is willing to risk his own money along with that of the state, he should have the right to make any film he likes. The CFDC should transform itself into a mixed company of public and private capital. In the first

stage, the government should reduce the money it gives to other agencies involved in film production and increase considerably the budget of the CFDC. The fact that the cost of a more or less successful film is about a million must be taken into account. In our conditions, such a budget is realistic because crowds are running to see super-productions like *Jaws* and others whose budgets went far above \$10,000,000.

The CFDC should not close its doors to films produced here by great international filmmakers. Once in a while, such a film made by a world celebrity would stimulate our creativity and make our industry more viable.

The CFDC should also make changes in its board. I would surround the present director with men who "breathe" cinema – and such men do exist here. If we really decide to have a cinema industry and not just talk about it, then the new CFDC must be given the means to work and the freedom to operate on a world scale because, whether we like it or not, there is no possibility of a viable industry in this field if it is not oriented towards the international market.

I think that such a new CFDC, once established and cleansed of its narrow conceptions, could be extremely useful to our cinema industry – which will remain modest for a long time, not only because of the lack of expertise (filmmakers, producers) but because of our tastes for things American (from hotdogs to automobiles) and also because of the enormous costs that will always be involved in this industry. Our linguistic duality will leave us for a long time handicapped by French and American cinema, because to be successful on the foreign market means to receive the stamp of approval of New York and Paris. It is a harsh reality that we must be aware of. Finally, it is the CFDC that should be responsible for solving the problem of showing our films in theatres without resorting to quotas on foreign films or other simplistic and unrealistic methods.

The Canada Council

All reasonable people will admit that the Canada Council is trying to be the fairest of all federal agencies. As far as cinema is concerned, the Council is just starting to contribute. It would be beneficial that this agency play a much more important role, with an increased budget, than it does at present. The CFDC could help the industrial side of cinema and the Council the cultural side. As long as a government institution remains the judge concerning the good of the population, nothing can be said against it but the moment it becomes judge and participant at the same time, it cannot work any more in a democratic system. The Canada Council should play, in the field of cinema, the same role as it plays in other cultural fields and to my knowledge, there is no national commissioner for theatre or music. In this case, we could do without the commissioners from the National Film Board, the Festivals Bureau and the National Archives.

I realize it is sometimes difficult to tell in advance whether a film is "commercial". I think Canada Council grants for a film should never go over \$50,000. As one

criterion for selection, we might say that the types of films made by students or the ones produced at present by the National Film Board should be subsidized by the Council. Moreover, applications to the Council would be made directly while, in the case of the CFDC, the producing company would take the necessary steps and make the commitments.

The Festivals Bureau

I would not mention this Bureau if it were not constantly messing things up. For political or other reasons (definitely outmoded) this agency thinks of itself as the absolute master of any Canadian participation in other countries and thus undermines the efforts of organizations which have exchanges with the outside. On the other hand, this Bureau does not consider it one of its prerogatives to help a strictly Canadian film festival. It is easy to organize activities in other countries when all expenses are paid by the government, but we also need people who work here on Canadian soil.

For many organizations, exchanges with other countries depend on reciprocity. And what then is the role of the Office of Cinema of the Department of Foreign Affairs if it is not to take care of our activities in other countries? However, when a grant is requested from the Festivals Bureau, the answer is always the same: no money. But when it is the Bureau itself which is organizing, then official delegations can be seen from Cannes to Sorrente (without, incidentally, representation of the private sector which the Bureau of Festivals was created to help). Officials travel everywhere under the grand title of "Cinema Canada" instead of directly helping the distributors and producers to sell their films. In Cannes, our films are not sold by the Festivals Bureau but by Carle, Link, Demers and David themselves, and they are the ones who should be our delegates. Like the Australians and their koalas, we are trying to sell an image of the country. But the professionals who go to Cannes to buy films are not interested in the "delegations" of Ottawa, Melbourne or Quebec. On the contrary, this insistence on bureaucracy can be detrimental to our films because serious festival organizers are suspicious of officials. Our Bureau abuses its publicity here as well as outside. To impress its employers (for reasons of budget) the Festivals Bureau declares everywhere in newspapers that Canadian cinema was never better represented than in Cannes this year. However, in the official competition, only one film, *Metamorphosis*, was presented by Canada. This student film received the Palme d'Or – but it took part in the Festival only because of the efforts of my Conservatory and not those of the Festivals Bureau. In 1969, we had nine feature films in the "Quinzaine des Réalistes"; in 1976 we had only two. If the CFDC is reorganized, it would make sense that it become responsible for helping our producers and distributors to sell on the international scene. An office with three persons in Cannes would be sufficient to give out all information on Canadian productions. It would be illogical for the CFDC, whose role it is to help the cinema industry, not to be present in the professional film festivals of the world. For all

other festivals, no agency would be better chosen than the Canada Council to take care of everything in a fair way.

The Film Archives

When its history is written, it will be said that the Film Archives of Ottawa were founded over the dead body of the Canadian Film Institute. This expression may be strong but unfortunately it reflects the truth. History will also say that our government stopped having faith in private cultural institutions. In this particular case, the government allowed some officials, worthy of the military regimes of Latin America, to take over a great institution which had proved its value since 1935. The directors of the Institute tried everything to get some aid from the state, but in vain. To mislead the public, there was a "merging" between the archives of the Institute and the almost nonexistent ones of the National Archives. It was a scandalous "coup d'état". What is also sad is that our parliamentary opposition has never been interested in cultural questions.

Of course, the federal government has the right and the duty to set up National Archives that will preserve its filmed documents but when the Archives try to take over and control other private institutions (by controlling their subsidies), we do not have a democracy anymore but neo-fascism. The Archives are getting involved everywhere and if the government does not examine their more dubious activities (for example, trying to organize some festivals in other countries) there will not be any future for private initiatives. What good is it to try to improve the quality of culture in our country when we know that a federal or provincial official will do all he can to crush you? Such people are interested in power only and are cut off from the cultural and educational needs of the masses. In socialist countries, governments have at least the decency to admit that they want to direct and decide everything (economy as well as the freedom and culture of citizens) but there the expression "private enterprise" has no meaning.

This said, I still believe that the Archives could play an important role in safekeeping our national heritage so long as their aim is not to build new empires. This tendency towards aggrandizement was clearly seen in the discussion organized by the Canada Council last June 14 and 15. It is to be hoped that after this discussion, another attitude will be taken in this field. If the National Film Board is reorganized, I think the National Archives should become part of it rather than of the Public Archives. The Board has the technical means and experience necessary; it also has its own collection. It would be illogical to create a new technical government agency because, if the agency is only for "preservation", it is a question of money and nothing else.

The CBC

It is not my purpose to analyze here the greatnesses and the weaknesses of this government monster but because it is an important factor in cinema, I want to say a few words about it. This institution is at present too powerful and we should not let it become bigger by monopolizing other areas but should reduce its power as much

as possible to make it competitive with private networks. The CBC is already too costly for what it is doing.

Concerning cinema, CBC-TV is a stop-gap. It can be said that, in part, it is because of television that our cinema was never successful in theatres; this is at least my experience in Montreal. Let us imagine the following authentic scenario: the CBC advertises it is presenting a certain Canadian film on March 27; a small independent theatre advertises the same film for March 29; failure of the film in the theatre. At any rate, most Quebec films were shown on TV in the course of the year. The few persons who were interested in seeing the films reflected that it was not worth going out to see the films since they would see them on TV.

State-owned television was certainly not intended as a dumping ground for films nor as a film producer. Even the Sunday program *Les beaux dimanches* has started showing films. Such dumping can work for American films because, in the case of *The Godfather* for example, the film has already made a fortune in theatres and can now afford to get a few million more on the various TVs of the world. But such a method is fatal for a film produced here: right in the beginning, the film is handicapped commercially in theatres and the CBC pays only peanuts. (A filmmaker is not paid more than \$10,000 while the production cost may be around \$350,000.) If the CBC gave the film producer the same amount they pay for a Lise Payette show or an Olympic Lottery special, the Corporation would really be helping our cinema. If state television forgot about film production and left it to private industry, the latter would be seriously reinforced. The CBC's own production studios are not only detrimental to the independent sector but literally kill it. The great networks in the United States are always using the resources of private industry and I don't see why we cannot do the same, the more so as the production of a CBC film or show involves a real army of people which makes for a terrible waste of public money. The CBC, as a corporation representing the Canadian taxpayer, should have an obligation to contribute seriously to our film production and not only to overblown projects destined to justify high budgets in Ottawa.

Conclusion

If I took the liberty in this article of discussing exclusively federal agencies, it is because I believe that the development of cinema depends right now for a large part on the federal government. It is true that the provinces, in particular Quebec, have the intention of doing something in the field of cinema but since provincial institutions are still embryonic and more narrow in their conception than the bureaucratic federal agencies, I have omitted them.

I know how difficult it is to break up certain pyramids. But if we believe in democracy, if we believe in the contribution of citizens to the economic-cultural life of our country, it is time the federal government took away the monopoly from its institutions and showed more confidence in private initiative. We have the means, we just have to use our resources in the light of the reality of 1976. □

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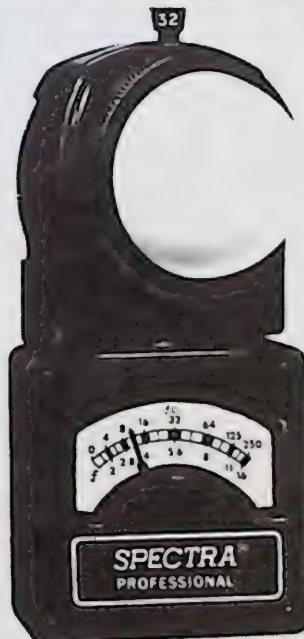
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FILM REVIEWS

Bob Clark's

Breaking Point

d. Bob Clark, asst. d. Tony Thatcher, sc. Roger E. Swaybill and Stanley Mann, ph. Marc Champion c.s.c., sp. Bud Cardos, ed. Stan Cole, sup. ed. Ian McBride, sd. Russ Heisse and Mel Lovell, a.d. Wolf Kroeger, cost. Debbie Weldon and Judy Gellman, l.p. Bo Svenson (Michael McBain), Robert Culp (Frank Sirrianni), Belinda J. Montgomery (Diana McBain), Steve Young (Peter Stratis), John Colicos, Linda Sorenson, Jeffrey Lynas, Gerry Salsberg, Richard M. Davidson, exec. p. Harold Greenberg and Alfred Pariser, p. Claude Héroux and Bob Clark, p. manager David Robertson, p.c. Twentieth Century-Fox and Breaking Point Production Ltd., 1975, col. 35 mm, running time 94 minutes, dist. Astral.

The full house was encased in the plush environment of the Ontario Science Centre auditorium, the comfort that your bottom experienced totally forgotten as the extreme punishment your mind was subjected to overwhelmed it. **Breaking Point**, a co-production between Twentieth Century-Fox of Lotus Land and Astral Communications of Canada was unfolding on the screen.

The main cause of the discomfort was more indirect, but the movie itself must be faced first in this discussion. If you're lucky, you didn't have to face it. Another formula picture combining **Walking Tall** morality (you've got to take the law into your own hands) with revenge (you're the only one who can make them pay properly for their dastardly deeds) and plenty of action, preferably violent in ways not seen recently on the screen (break the guy's neck so the sound effects department can

search for a new sound); in short, let's get the action market and take the money and run.

Bo Svenson is a good citizen of a North US city who testifies against crummy mob hoods after witnessing a murder. He appears in court only after impotent cop Robert Culp assures him that he will be protected. But archvillain John Colicos wants revenge, and so kills Svenson's assistant and threatens his family. Culp arranges an identity change and a move to Toronto. Svenson likes Toronto because he likes to play hockey. But Colicos lures him back by killing his sister's boyfriend; Svenson takes things into his own hands and destroys Colicos' hoods, plush office cabin at the real estate tycoon's construction site, and finally the archvillain himself.

There are several inconsistencies. Svenson runs a karate school and never uses karate to protect himself or get revenge; maybe it's too lofty a technique for the dirt he's after. Neither, strangely enough, does his assistant, who prefers to be killed without any protest, probably for the higher good of furthering the plot. Svenson's wife is divorced; her ex-husband, played with some life by Stephen Young, stupidly endangers all their lives by finding the group after being told he must never see them again for their own good. He promptly leads Colicos' hood, played with excellent but one-dimensional leering by Gerry Salsberg, to the group, and, in an idyllic scene in High Park, is set on fire by Salsberg's fire bomb. Young, burnt to a crisp after being enveloped in flames, is thrown into the pond by Svenson's mighty, split-second leap, and survives with hairdo perfectly intact.

Nor are we presented with any indication of motivation. Why Colicos cares about such crummy hoods is not only left unexplained, it hardly suffices to make Colicos go mad, which he becomes instantaneously. Nor can we discover how Culp ever got his job, because he spends the entire movie telling Svenson how sorry he is. But he probably got a lot of money for having to memorize so little dialogue.

Perhaps it's the fault of the script. The story is by Roger Swaybill and



McBain (Bo Svenson) uses his judo expertise on mobster Vigorito (Gerry Salsberg)

the script by Swaybill and Stanley Mann. Their forte is not dialogue; a love scene between Svenson's sister, played totally incognito by Belinda Montgomery, and her boyfriend, contains a remarkable collection of clichés — all the clichés possible, according to my count.

Perhaps it's the fault of director Bob Clark. He can infuse a suspense plot with some good psychological effects, as evidenced in **Black Christmas**. Here the characters just leap from script page to script page, killing someone as often as possible. Clark's use of under-exposed lighting and much graininess (Reg Morris was DOP on **Black Christmas** and Marc Champion did this film, but both visuals bear the stamp of Clark more than the individual DOPs) can be effective, but the editing, credited to Stan Cole, renders any psychological effect useless by its fast jumps, more for TV than film; no scene contains less than millions of cuts, and each scene seems to last seconds.

Perhaps it's the budget. Producers Claude Héroux and Bob Clark had a tight one million dollars to spend, including a last scene of mass destruction. That explains why so few extras turned up for a gala project party that Colicos threw for the town elite. Maybe the town didn't have any elite.

Film Credit Abbreviations: d.: Director. asst. d.: Assistant Director. sc.: Script. adapt.: Adaptation. dial.: Dialogue. ph.: Photography. sp. ph. eff.: Special Photographic Effects. ed.: Editor. sup. ed.: Supervising Editor. sd.: Sound. sd. ed.: Sound Editor. sd. rec.: Sound Recording. p. des.: Production Designer. a.d.: Art Director. set. dec.: Set Decorator. m.: Music. m.d.: Music Director. cost.: Costumes. choreo.: Choreography. l.p.: Leading Players. exec. p.: Executive Producer. p.: Producer. assoc. p.: Associate Producer. p. sup.: Production Supervisor. p. man.: Production Manager. p.c.: Production Company. col.: Colour Process. dist.: Distributors.

At any rate, Colicos did say that his part had been cut drastically when it hit the screen, so perhaps there was more editing than was intended by those listed on the credits. That's beside the point, because the audience judges what is actually on the screen, and on this screen is a mess.

The violence is not mindless, to use a much-employed term. It was conscious, and each disgusting event revolted because of that fact, not because we felt sorry for the victim or awe for the doer. And after the group leaves the city to move to Canada, they travel on a superhighway, until they near the border. Then the road becomes single car-width through dense, scary bush, and the border consists of a well-armed threatening guard who asks for papers; exactly, we know, how one gets to Toronto, because Toronto is now some Eastern European city in a Graham Greene World War II thriller.

I may seem to be harsh on what is, after all, only another junk movie that even failed at the box office. But I don't think so. I'm not against "commercial" movies (that's a misnomer if there ever was one; every movie is commercial because the filmmaker wants someone to see it and wants to make another movie). In fact any industry needs action films as well as every other kind of film. I'm against this kind of film because, first of all, it's badly made. If you're going to do it, do it right. It can be cheap, good and make good money. Roger Corman proves that. And so did David Cronenberg; his horror film was a first-rate example of the genre. But the bargain basement party scene and insulting violence in *Breaking Point* is inexcusable.

Furthermore, at the preview I attended, held for the press, cast and crew, a disturbing note was sounded, or rather blared. Several heavies, first from Fox and then from Astral, conveyed the wisdom that this film was an example of the kind Canadians should be making in order to establish a film industry, a film made for the world market that shows what Canada can do.

Well, this is most emphatically not the film to hold up to international scrutiny. It insults its audience, and Canadians can surely make action pictures that are first-class and have respect for their audiences. Certainly Canadians working in the US and Europe have done so.

Stephen Chesley

REVIEWS OF SHORT FILMS

A Sense of Place

d. René Bonnière, narrator Barry Morse, ph. Michel Thomas d'Hoste, ed. Barrie Howells, sup. ed. Tina Viljoen, sd. ed. John Knight, sd. re-rec. Jean-Pierre Joutel, exec. p. Colin Low, p. Roman Bittman, p. manager Marcel Malackiet, p.c. National Film Board of Canada and the Canadian Habitat Secretariat, 1976, col. 16 mm., running time 56 minutes 50 seconds, dist. NFB.

Vancouver was the site and Habitat was the conference — the "other" world gathering hosted by Canada this summer. The subject was vast: human settlement and all the contemporary and future problems inherent in living on the planet. Despite the infusion of politics by the small-minded opportunists who deflected the goals of the gathering, some aspects of the conference worked, especially the films shown. Over 120 films were screened, and the National Film Board's one-hour documentary, *A Sense of Place*, was the keynote effort, created to outline the conference's concerns and to raise questions to be possibly answered during the official discussions. How fitting to



Modern contrasts in *A Sense of Place*

have the great Canadian documentary tradition combine with the NFB, the great Canadian documentary makers, and produce the main film. It's too bad the film fails to generate excite-

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ment, and perhaps the reason can be found in that documentary tradition.

Producer Roman Bittman, a veteran CBC producer who has worked mainly with the documentary series *The Nature of Things* — and his past shows directly in the style of this film — heads the NFB's environment studio. His list of consultants drips with prestige: Barbara Ward, Lister Sinclair, and various specialists. He took his crew through eight countries for material, and director Rene Bonniere provides straightforward dispensation of the facts and visuals involved in the current urbanization of the world, wherein people are flocking to cities, abandoning a rural heritage for what is, despite privation, a better life.

Population control, health concerns, the tide of immigrants (emphasized by the gates of cattle-car-like trains spilling out their cargo into congested railyards in Asia), birth control, all are discussed in simple, direct fashion. Fact to example to possible solution with no final answer; the basic documentary formula. At times an

interesting and fresh idea seeps through: in Chicago we see how building codes developed to protect homeowners now prohibit rehabilitation by engulfing the prospective buyer in red tape. In western Canada the farms that offered hope to settlers at the turn of the century now offer hopelessness. Frustration at red tape and a direct uprooting from the family's past are two aspects that present a filmmaker with the chance for emotion, a concept totally lacking in this film.

The style of the film is pure 1950s documentary in its uncluttered, dispassionate examination of its subject matter. But that kind of documentary, so effective when it revealed new worlds, doesn't work when an audience needs to be shown new aspects of that now-familiar world. On a purely functional level of getting the information across, this film works; on the level of audience involvement, it misses. Somehow, the latter is now as necessary as the former.

Stephen Chesley

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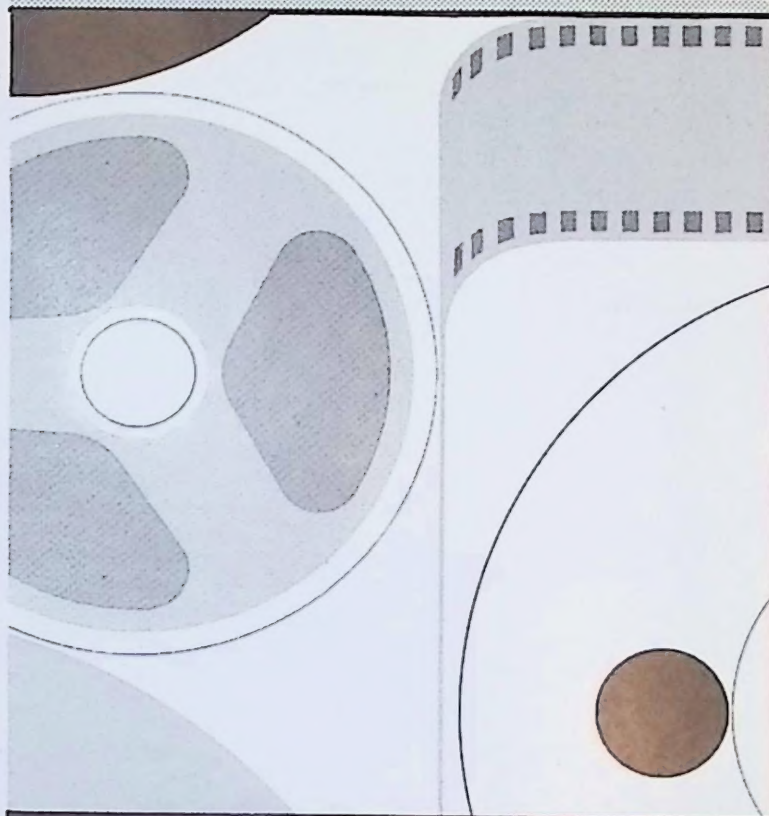


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It's knowing where to go when delivery, quality and consistency are top priority — that speciality types are as readily available as the standard run of perforated magnetic film and tape. For users of Pyral professional tape, the same sought-after standards apply, while Pyral lacquer discs are regularly used by record manufacturers throughout the world. In fact, the list of film, T V and recording studios using Pyral products reads like a "Who's Who" in the world of sound engineering. We would like to add the name of your company to that list right now. *Why not get in touch?*

perforated magnetic film

In both tri-acetate and polyester bases Excellent Signal/Noise ratio and high audio-frequency response. Available in the following sizes in all accepted coating patterns:—

35mm 2000' 1000' Other lengths to order
16mm 2000' 1200' Other lengths to order
Super 8 1192' 492' (polyester base only)

Studio-Master Tape CJ87

With low print through characteristics. In ¼", ½", 1" and 2" widths, and in all preferred lengths. Pyral CJ87 is manufactured to the highest mechanical and functional standards. It has an outstanding stability of 1dB at 10KHz and dependable batch consistency.

Professional 1/4" Tape

For radio, T.V. and film industry general use. Low noise, high output, competitively priced.

Cassette Tape

C60, C90, C120. Also, cobalt active cassette tapes for premium recording without the need to change bias levels.

Bulk Cassette Tape Available in C60, C90, C120.

Lacquer Discs

The lacquering process and strict quality control used by Pyral have made their lacquer discs the first choice of record manufacturers all over the world

Pyral . . . L'écho du monde

PROFESSIONAL DIVISION



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Toronto
April 14, 1976

Mr. Fin Quinn,
Quinn Laboratories Limited,
380 Adelaide Street West,
Toronto, Ontario.

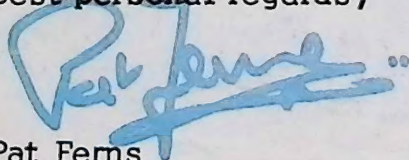
Dear Fin:

Thank you indeed for your reply to my letter of February 27, 1976 and for your cooperation in the various tests we conducted. It is with great pleasure that I can inform you that Quinn has been selected to handle all our laboratory work and Mirrophonic all our sound requirements on this production. I know you share my view that this whole decision-making process has been done in an open and professional way and I can assure you that Imperial Oil Limited, who shared with us in these deliberations are fully confident of the talents and skills that your organization will bring to this task.

I should like us to have an early meeting with Fern Aube to organize logistical details and I shall probably prepare a more formal document accepting your bid and attaching the terms and conditions to which you agreed as supplementary documentation.

I trust that we will see you at the announcement tomorrow.

Best personal regards,



Pat Ferns
Director of Production

PF/lb

THE NEWCOMERS

TO MARK THE 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF
IMPERIAL OIL'S FOUNDING BY A GROUP
OF CANADIAN BUSINESSMEN IN LONDON,
ONTARIO, ON SEPTEMBER 18TH, 1880, THE
COMPANY HAS COMMISSIONED SEVEN
HOUR-LONG MOTION PICTURES UNDER
THE TITLE: THE NEWCOMERS: INHABITING
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IMPERIAL OIL

thanks Pat Fin!